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O U T L I N E S

OF

LECTURES

ON THE

B O O K O F D A N I E L .

BY THE

REV. F. A. COX, D. D. LL. D.

First American Edition.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

THE laws of courtesy demand of the publisher, in presenting this volume to the American reader, a brief reference, not only to the learned author, but also to the contents of the work. The standing of Dr. Cox, both in the literary and religious world, will undoubtedly secure for this book a favorable introduction; and it can hardly be expected that any one who commences it, and is desirous of acquiring *practical* views of the inspired word, will be dissatisfied with the remarkably apposite deductions, and elegant illustrations, which are here embodied.

It has been truly said, though there is keenness in the remark, that most of those who undertake to write upon the prophecies, take upon themselves the prophetic office; in making up by *suppositions*, what is wanting in *facts*, for the perfection of their theories. To this charge the present author is not obnoxious.— Leaving the deep, unfathomed mine of futurity to be explored and developed by Him, who knoweth the end from the beginning, and who is wonderful in counsel, as well as mighty in power; he has generally taken the more humble, safe, and useful office of portraying the character of a man who could be pious at an idolatrous court, and a politician too, (if high office entitles to that distinction,) without the sacrifice of principle. A countryman of Dr. Cox's has written on "Decision of Character"; but did he not overlook these more than heroic instances, recorded in the Book of Daniel? The mere hero is a man of *this* world, but the pious hero is a being of two worlds—and such were Daniel and his three brethren, when threatened with the terrors of the fiery furnace and the lion's den.

Commendation after the work has been read will be unnecessary, and if offered previously might be deemed gratuitous; nevertheless, it is certainly proper to say; that in several English publications this volume has been spoken of in terms of high approbation, while it is also due to the author, as well as to the public, to notice a letter from Prof. Lee, of the University of Cambridge, (Eng.) in which he expresses the opinion, that the plan and execution of these Lectures is among the happiest specimens of biblical instruction within his knowledge.

To this sentiment the writer most fully responds, and would only add, that these Lectures are equally adapted to instruct and edify the unlearned as well as the learned; the Sabbath school teacher, or the member of a Bible class.

The recent visit of Dr. Cox to this country, has justly endeared his memory to a large circle of christians and philanthropists, and it cannot be doubted that thousands, who have seen his face, will delight to peruse a work which the author has conducted through several editions in his native country.

C. C. P. C.

NEW-YORK, February, 1836.

LECTURES
ON
THE BOOK OF DANIEL,
&c. &c.

DANIEL I.

It is characteristic of Scripture biography to record the censurable actions of good men, as well as their virtues and graces ; the entire omission of the former, therefore, in the account of Daniel, leads to the conclusion, that he was a person of pre-eminent excellence. It is not merely, however, from evidence of this negative character, but from the exhibition of extraordinary qualities of the highest order, that he has been usually regarded as one of the most perfect of human beings.

Daniel was a descendant of the kings of Judah. He flourished during the reigns of several Babylonish and Median monarchs, till the period of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. The book which bears his superscription, and of which he was the probable author, contains a mixture of history and prophecy.

Josephus states that this volume was shown to Alexander the Great when he was at Jerusalem. The interest it awakened in the conqueror's mind, might have been such as to induce his favorable treatment of the Jews, after having shown some exasperation against them, in consequence of their refusing, as it was said, to supply his army with corn, during the siege of Tyre.

Verse 1.—In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2.—And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

The date of this overthrow of Jerusalem, which commenced in the third, and terminated in the fourth year of the captivity of Jehoiakim, may be fixed with sufficient certainty, A. M., 3398, or about 600 years before the Christian era.

What a melancholy picture does the history of our race exhibit; a picture not only of sufferings, but of mutual wrongs! Sin has embroiled mankind in endless hostilities, and filled the whole earth with violence. Families discordant, cities besieged, and nations at war,—are the events that replenish those volumes with tragical narrations, which ought

to have presented to us the annals of benevolence, friendship, and improvement.

The success of Nebuchadnezzar is expressly attributed to the providence of God. It arose from his "determinate counsel and foreknowledge." In numberless instances wherein we can discern nothing but the operation of human passions, there is in reality an all-controlling superintendence and agency: some profound design which the foresight of man in vain attempts to pursue through its mysterious ramifications, or even to perceive in its incipient form, is to be accomplished, which it may be, other times shall develope, and other generations witness; or results are in preparation, which, lying concealed for ages from our view, shall only emerge from the darkness of time, amidst the bright and wonderful revelations of eternity. The narratives of Scripture differ from those of common history in this, among other respects, that the revolutions of empires, and the contentions of states, are noticed only so far as they concern the kingdom of heaven, or affect the interests of the people of God. Hence the minutest circumstances, and the smallest movements acquire importance and rise into grandeur; but, dissociated from this connexion, the greatest and the most splendid sink into insignificance.

Should any one be tempted to inquire whether God had not forgotten his covenant with

Abraham, and the mercies promised to his ancient people, with reference to whose sacred abode he had said, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it," (Ps. cxxxii. 14.)—their apprehensions of divine faithfulness may be allayed by remarking the emphatic character of the declaration, "The *Lord* gave Jehoiakim into his (Nebuchadnezzar's) hand." This providence was punitive, and intended to bring the nation to a proper sense of their transgressions. This is expressly intimated in several passages, 2 Kings xxiv. 2, 3; "And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets.—3. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did."—Jeremiah xxv. 8, 11; "Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; because ye have not heard my words,—11. This whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Chap. xxvii. 6; "And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him."

Nebuchadnezzar is said to have carried a portion of the sacred vessels into the land of Shinar, into the house of his god. This was the original name of the country where Babylon stood, and where the tower of Babel was built. In the same place, or very near it, was an idol's temple, where the captured vessels were deposited in honor of the imaginary deity, to whom the king imputed his victory over the Jews. This treasure house was probably the edifice to which Herodotus refers, where a large golden statue of Jupiter was erected. There were also others of Juno and Rhea. Historians compute the riches of this temple at upwards of twenty millions sterling.

Far be it from us, under the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, to urge the decoration of places of worship in pompous imitation of heathen splendor, or of Jewish magnificence; yet, may not Christians take a lesson of humiliation from contrasting the punctilious solicitude of idolators respecting their temples, and the costly sacrifices so readily and extensively made by the superstitious in religion, with their frequent parsimony and reluctance in maintaining the worship of the true God? It comports not, indeed, with the simplicity of the gospel, to rear ornate and splendid edifices for the celebration of its observances; nor, on the other hand, does it accord with the liberality of its spirit, for the professed

disciples of Christ, to allow his cause to be encumbered with debt, and ground down by legalized oppressions.

Verse 3.—And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes.

4.—Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well-favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

5.—And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank : so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

The object of this careful selection of distinguished individuals, was doubtless to enhance the king's glory in the eyes of the courtiers, and of the empire; and it was calculated to produce this effect, because the more honorable his attendants, the more exalted would he himself appear. The oriental monarchs have always been remarkable for this display, that they might as much as possible impose upon the ignorant multitude, whether they kept a splendid court at home, or travelled with a magnificent retinue abroad.

How naturally may our thoughts be directed to the "King of Zion," who, apart from every motive of human ambition, and influenced solely by a benevolent aim to impart happiness to the miserable, and salvation to the

lost, chose his followers and associates from among the poor, illiterate, and despised. It was neither his purpose to invest himself with external grandeur, nor raise his followers to posts of earthly dignity; but by placing them in the domain of his own voluntary poverty, to shew that the only legitimate objects of ambition were virtue and religion.

That the Chaldeans, who were celebrated for their science, should have forced it into subserviency to the absurdities of astrology and magic, is deeply to be lamented; but we may conclude, that Daniel and his companions kept themselves free from these delusions. Probably there was no attempt to coerce these youthful captives, by the employment of a despotic authority, which, it is evident, even at this early age of their history, they possessed the courage to resist. Education is important, but we must never lose sight of its genuine design. Let young persons determine to *consecrate* as well as to *acquire* knowledge; and let their instructors be at least as solicitous of imparting moral and spiritual wisdom, as of cultivating the intellectual faculties.

Verse 6.—Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah;

7.—Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

The object of this change of names, in connexion with their instruction in Chaldean literature, was to induce them to forget their own religion and country, and slide easily into idolatrous observances. It has been observed, that as all their former names related to the true God, so all their newly imposed names had some reference to Babylonish idols.

Daniel signifies in Hebrew *God is my judge*; Belteshazzar, in Chaldee, means *the treasure of Baal*; Hananiah, in Hebrew, is *well pleasing to God*; Shadrach, in Chaldee, is *the inspiration of the Sun*; Mishaël, in Hebrew, is *proceeding from God*; Meshach, in Chaldee, *belonging to the goddess Sheshach*; Azariah, in Hebrew, *God is my help*; Abed-nego, in Chaldee, *the servant of Nego*, that is, the sun or morning star, both of them esteemed as deities by the Babylonians.

Verse 8.—But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9.—Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10.—And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which ARE of your sort? then shall ye make ME endanger my head to the king.

11.—Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah.

- 12.—Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.
- 13.—Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the kings meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.
- 14.—So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.
- 15.—And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the kings's meat.
- 16.—Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

In these verses we perceive the elements of Daniel's eminent character. Observe,

I. The **DANGERS** by which he was encompassed.

As in all probability, he had not at this time attained to more than twenty years of age, he was much exposed by *his youth and inexperience*. In that season of life the world assumes its most attractive appearance, and finds the greatest facility in imposing its delusions for realities. The brilliance of the morning deceives the unpractised traveller; and the snares which are laid to entrap virtue, are but too frequently successful. Hence arises the importance of sowing the seeds of religion in "the fields of youth."

Daniel was *a captive, and yet elevated to a state of flattering distinction*. This was a two-fold source of hazard. As a captive he was

in the power of the conqueror, and of the officers of his court; and as one who was selected on account of his personal appearance and general capacity to be trained to exalted station, he was peculiarly liable to be led astray by the enchantments of the world. His captivity tended to break his spirits; his distinctions to corrupt his virtue. Authority on the one hand, and flattery on the other, formed a powerful confederacy against his principles.

His destiny, moreover, seemed to be linked with that of his friends; and as the leading individual amongst them, upon him fell the greatest weight of responsibility. The conduct they adopted in this emergency was doubtless suggested by him, and his sentiments materially guided their judgment. He thus involved them in the consequences of his decisions; and these were not unimportant to "strangers in a strange land."

II. The MORAL TRIUMPH which Daniel obtained. It was complete and glorious.

He appears to have been *perfectly conscientious*. Reflection roused into action a feeling of insuperable reluctance to what was wrong; he "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Much of the food in use among the heathen was forbidden by the Mosaic law; and had not this been the case, their custom of offering up a part at their

daily meals, as an acknowledgment to their gods, was revolting to these servants of the Most High. It is unsafe to resist the dictates of an enlightened conscience.

He was besides *entirely decided* ; having resolved the subject in his mind he would not swerve. We should always think before we act, especially in religion ; but then proceed with a prompt, vigorous, and persevering determination.

There was a graceful modesty in Daniel connected with his moral heroism. Although he had "purposed in his heart" not to defile himself with heathen dainties, yet "he *requested* of the prince of the eunuchs (or personal attendants of the king) that he might not defile himself." His conduct was respectful as it was firm. When young persons are compelled by principle to forsake father and mother, to separate from the most endeared associations of life, let them avoid all offensiveness of *manner*. What *must* be done for conscience-sake, *should* be done for religion's sake *courteously*. The proper regulation of the temper is an essential part of piety itself ; and never does christianity appear more lovely than when she stands confessed with the spirit of martyrdom in her eye, and the blush of modesty upon her cheek.

Daniel manifested *great judgment and wisdom*. He did not press the point upon Ash-

penaz, who supposed that a compliance with his request would endanger him at court, but made a judicious proposal to Melzar, which that inferior officer consented to adopt, and adopted with success. It is remarked by Poole's Continuator, that by exchanging the meat and wine for pulse, he gained the costly provision of four men for three years, adding, "Courtiers are no losers by the favour they procure for God's servants."

Hence we perceive also that Daniel evinced *an exemplary spirit of self-denial and temperance*. Instead of yielding to the temptations of luxury, he voluntarily subjected himself to the humblest fare, that appetite might not betray him into sin: besides, his patriotic and religious sympathies determined him to prefer abstinence, while his country and his friends were suffering degradation. The 15th verse furnishes a clear evidence that the divine blessing sanctioned his conduct.

Verse 17.—As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18.—Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19.—And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore stood they before the king.

20.—And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times

better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realms.

21.—And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

“Every good and every perfect gift is from above.” It is the prerogative of God to qualify individuals for the stations which his providence destines them to occupy. Daniel was distinguished from his companions as the possessor of prophetic endowments.—Though *they* had “knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom,” *he* had “understanding in all visions and dreams.” These were among the most ancient modes of divine communication. “If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.” Numb. xii. 6.

The investigation which Nebuchadnezzar instituted, and which he personally undertook, into the literary progress of the Jewish captives, was honorable to his character as a sovereign. It proves that he was by no means an unobservant spectator of what was passing around him; and that he did not suffer himself to overlook the affairs of state for the sake of self-indulgence. Though we cannot commend the object he had in view, or sympathize with the ambitious motives by which he was guided, yet his activity and zeal merit our approbation.

The king's preference of the four illustrious Jews was remarkable, when it is recollected that the Chaldeans boasted of their literature and science, and deemed all other nations to be barbarians. Surely this superiority on their part, which attracted royal favor in so extraordinary a degree, was "from the Lord." He exalts and depresses according to his good pleasure, and to subserve the high purposes of his universal government. To him we are indebted for whatever talent, acquisition, or influence we possess—to him, in humble gratitude and with consecrated zeal, let us devote all !

LECTURE II.

DANIEL II.—13.

No delusion is greater or more frequent than to imagine that persons of elevated rank are inaccessible to the ordinary troubles of life. Others, who occupy inferior situations, are unable, owing to the distance, either to hear the expression of their sentiments, or to see through the external dazzle their actual circumstances; in consequence, they often envy when they should compassionate them. Nothing can be more true to nature and to experience than the poet's declaration,

“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

Of this we have evidence in the record which this chapter contains of the perturbations of mind incident to royalty; and throughout every gradation of society, we find a wise and merciful adjustment of the proportions, seldom, on the whole, remarkably unequal, of suffering and enjoyment. This is obviously the fact, although the sources of trouble are as diversified as the conditions of men.

Happy would it be if even the wise and the good were exempt from the misconceptions which prevail so extensively, and produce effects so lamentable in others; but the language of the psalmist is but too just a representation of the experience of all classes—"I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." The only effectual method of removing these impressions is pointed out in the instructions which he gained amidst the solemnities of religion—"I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

Verse 1.—And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

Dreaming, to which all nations, particularly orientals, have paid great attention; is one of the most curious and inexplicable phenomena of our nature. In estimating this faculty of the mind, we should avoid the extremes of contempt and of vulgar credulity. Dreams may be viewed as common and extraordinary.

Common dreams appear to result from the fragments of recollected thought, the exaggerations of fancy, and the combination into new forms, of circumstances with which we have been previously conversant: and these

renewals of the past in an imaginative character may arise from the state of the health, the peculiar condition of the mind, or other causes, which have more immediate relation to our physical temperament and constitution.

Extraordinary, or supernatural dreams are those which are sent by God to answer some important and special purpose, or to convey prophetic intimations. Abimelech was informed in a dream that Sarah was the wife of Abraham. Jacob was shown a mysterious ladder in a dream. He was also informed by an angel, in a similar manner, of the method of multiplying his flocks. Joseph was honored by prophetic dreams. Of this kind, evidently, were the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in this book.

Verse 2.—Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

3.—And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

4.—Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.

5.—The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me; if ye will not make known unto me the dream with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dung-hill:

6.—But if ye show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts, and rewards, and

great honor: therefore show me the dream and the interpretation thereof.

- 7.—They answered again, and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it.
- 8.—The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.
- 9.—But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you; for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof.
- 10.—The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.
- 11.—And it is a rare thing that the king requireth; and there is none other that can show it before the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.
- 12.—For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.
- 13.—And the decree went forth that all the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

The peculiarity of Nebuchadnezzar's dream renders his *forgetfulness* of it remarkable. It is true that these airy visions are often immediately dismissed from the mind; but a dream of a very striking character seldom vanishes entirely and at once from the memory. In this case, however, we may justly infer that the same hand which first impressed its singular features on the mind of the monarch, speedily obliterated every trace of it, to

answer an important end ; because, had it been recollected, he would have probably detailed the outlines to these practised magicians, who would have finished the affair by pacifying him with some plausible interpretation. Many suppose that Nebuchadnezzar's forgetfulness was only a pretext to try them. This is questionable, and certainly not intimated in the narrative.

It may be difficult, at this distance of time, to distinguish with perfect accuracy, the different orders of the pretenders to divination and learning here mentioned. The *magicians* and *astrologers* were those who were skilled in natural philosophy, and who addicted themselves to the casting of nativities. Some have thought also, with sufficient probability, that they were employed in the interpretation of hieroglyphics. The magi in Egypt, Persia, and other oriental nations, were similar in endowments and profession. These were the "wise men" who came to inquire after the birth of our Lord. The *sorcerers* were those who devoted themselves to necromancy, pretending, in the use of diabolical arts, to hold an intercourse with departed spirits. The term *Chaldeans* appears to be general and comprehensive. It is supposed that all these classes formed, under this common designation, a college of literary men, who, in addition to their science, professed to have com-

munications with superior beings, and, by means of incantations, to command their assistance; and, as they considered dreams to proceed from the agency of those beings, it must have been in their power, according to their own avowals, to recall a dream as well as to give the interpretation. These magicians were maintained at the public expense, and the threat implies, that the buildings appropriated to their use should be demolished, and their collegiate institution annihilated.

“There is none other,” say they, “that can show it before the king, except the gods;” and they had previously insisted, “there is not a man upon the earth that can show the king’s matter.” The allusion is probably to demons or departed spirits, who were considered as a kind of messengers between their reputed deities of the highest order and mankind.

Nebuchadnezzar declared, that if they did not reveal his dream, they should be “cut in pieces.” This terrible proceeding seems to have been frequent in ancient times. Agag was hewed in pieces by Samuel; and the Ammonites suffered in a similar manner, by the direction of David,—2 Sam. xii. 31. Our Saviour alludes to this punishment when he speaks of the wicked servant being “cut in sunder,”—Luke xii. 46; and in the epistle to the Hebrews, illustrious martyrs to the truth are said to have been “stoned, and sawn asunder.”

Among the Romans, when any person was found guilty of conspiring against the government, or the ruler, he was capitally punished, and his house demolished or appropriated to some other use. Instances of the same nature are traceable among the Greeks, as related by Herodotus and Pausanias.

When we reflect upon the arbitrary power with which this celebrated king was invested, and with which it was so common to entrust the monarchs of antiquity, it becomes us to cherish devout gratitude to God for the mild spirit of our constitution, and the useful restraints it imposes on the exercise of the highest functions of government. The enlightened age in which we live, the sound policy by which public measures are generally regulated, through being exposed to public inquiry and animadversion, and above all, the course of Providence, whose mercies have been so signally manifested to us as a nation, and to whose goodness we have every scriptural reason to appeal,—all inspire cheerful anticipations respecting futurity.

It does not appear that Daniel and his companions were required to accompany the other reputed magicians to the king ; for what reasons we cannot ascertain, and need not conjecture. The statement of the 13th verse, however, is adapted at once to rouse our sympathy and apprehension,—“ And the decree

went forth that the wisemen should be slain; and *they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.*" But however imminent the dangers in which God may suffer his faithful servants to be involved, his eye never ceases to watch over them. Sometimes, indeed, he permits them to perish by the hands of his enemies, or to be affected by the revolutions of society; but these events form a part of that mysterious agency by which the plans of an infinite government are accomplished. If these prospective and comprehensive designs do not require such a sacrifice, his people may rely on his special protection, his gracious presence, and his delivering mercy; and if they do, they may anticipate the consolations of his love in death, and a happy transmission to eternal rest.

This part of the narrative suggests a few remarks on the subject of ANGER—of which Solomon has remarked, with apparent severity, but justice—"anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Periander, of Corinth, one of the seven sages of Greece, formed so just a conception of the evils attendant upon the indulgence of this passion, that he left the following maxim as a bequest to posterity; "be master of thine anger." But, while even heathens were able to discern and lament its dire effects; Christianity has laid the axe at

the root of the tree, by requiring the extirpation of those principles which prompt to its unholy ebullitions.

We are reminded by this history, that—

1. Anger is *undignifying*. There are few of the vices in which a person appears in a more degraded character. If, in a paroxysm of anger, a man could borrow other eyes and look at himself, he would be filled with confusion and conscious shame.

2. It is *unreasonable*. In this state of excitement, the most convincing arguments, and the most well-founded remonstrances are alike disregarded. Truth loses all its force; reason abandons her throne; and the roused lion acquires not only the appropriate epithet, but the debased nature of the brute. Nebuchadnezzar furnished, on the occasion in question, a most unhappy specimen of this odious temper.

3. It is *destructive of that just and useful influence to which we should aspire, and for which every one is naturally capacitated by his position in society*. “A drunken man,” remarks an excellent author, “in the height of his intoxication, is looked upon as so far from being fit to receive or impart instruction, that he is considered as no longer master of his own conduct. He seems to act without consciousness, and to rush into mischief without apprehension of danger. As such, he is either

pitied or despised by those about him; and for the time, is hardly entitled to the rank of rational beings. It is much the same with him who is intoxicated with passion. Such a man cannot gain much influence over any but those who are necessarily his dependents. He may frighten his children or his servants; but, if his eyes were open, he might easily see that, while he tramples on those who cannot resist him, he is not revered for his virtue, but dreaded or despised for his brutality; and that he lives only to excite the contempt or hatred of society. He that has his *hand against every man*, need not wonder if *every man's hand is against him*. He lives in a state of war with mankind, as he is destitute of that meekness which is the cement of society, that love which is the *bond of perfectness*, that *charity which covers a multitude of sins*. In the present state of imperfection, mutual allowances are necessary to mutual usefulness. Without such allowances, variance, strife, and contention, will keep us perpetually at a distance from each other; and prevent us both from doing good to our fellow-creatures, and receiving good from them."

4. Anger usually *makes a rapid progress*. It resembles the torrent which rushes on with increasing impetuosity down a steep descent, spreading terror and devastation around. ▲ At first it may be only like "the letting out of

water ;” but it soon acquires a heedless and resistless power. This idea is conveyed in the twelfth verse, “The king was angry, and very furious.” He kindled as the debate proceeded, and he was wrought into incipient madness, as his will, however unreasonable, was counteracted. It is often found, that the less an angry man is in the right, the more enraged does he become.

5. Anger is *productive of great unhappiness*. Sometimes intemperate passion has led its victim to do a deed of mischief in one hour, or even in a single moment, which years have not been able to repair ; and for the perpetration of which, the man himself, when reason has resumed her influence, has bitterly, but hopelessly repented. The inward disquiet to which it gives birth, the self-lacerations it inflicts, and the general desecration of character it occasions by its effect upon other habits of mind and thought, it would be difficult adequately to describe ; but, on the other hand, the serenity and elevation of that spirit which is under due regulation, is beautifully depicted by a heathen moralist ; “The upper and better ordered part of the world next the stars, is driven together into no cloud, hurried into no tempest, never tossed about in any whirlwind, but is ever free from any thing of tumult. Only the inferior regions throw about thunders and lightnings. So is

the sublime mind always quiet, in a state of undisturbed tranquillity, sober, venerable, and composed."

6. Anger is a *most guilty passion*. The pleas which the passionate man sometimes urges after a paroxysm of rage, and not unfrequently insinuates even at the moment, in extenuation of its violence, are merely the subterfuges of a mind conscious, yet not willing to confess that it is in error. But no provocation can justify such intemperate sallies. How disgraced, and how criminal does he appear, whatever his station, whose wrathful explosions alike wound the sensibilities of love, sever the bonds of friendship, and violate the decorum of society! Anger is denounced in the New Testament as one of the "works of the flesh." The late eminent Robert Hall, after adverting to the declarations of Scripture against the indulgence of the irascible and malignant feelings, adds: "Vindictive passions surround the soul with a sort of turbulent atmosphere, than which nothing can be conceived more opposite to that calm and holy light in which the blessed Spirit loves to dwell."

Unquestionably there are occasions, as some have pleaded, when anger is lawful; as, when it is employed against our own sins, the vices of others, the disorders found in the house of God, and the irregularities of

our own families. The more appropriate appellation, however, in these instances, would perhaps be *displeasure*; meaning to express thereby a state of mind which supposes the exercise of judgment, in contradistinction to that which obviously precludes it.

With the New Testament in our hands, we cannot fail of perceiving the importance of a due regulation of the temper, to attest and to exemplify personal religion. Does not Christianity require that in this, as well as in other respects, we should differ from others, and “do more” than they? Ought we not constantly to represent to ourselves the “meekness and gentleness” of him whom we profess to love and to imitate; and whose example benignly irradiates every page of the evangelical narratives? His displeasure, indeed, was strongly manifested against flagrant impiety or base principle; but how exemplary were his forbearance, kindness, endurance of contradiction, and patience in suffering! With what a softened effulgence did his majesty shine through his meekness! In one instance, it is true, when the Pharisees endeavored to find an occasion of preferring an accusation against him, on the ground of his healing on the Sabbath-day, “he looked round about on them with anger;” but he must possess little discrimination in reading the sacred narrative, who does not perceive the charac-

ter of this display of feeling, as it is immediately intimated in the words, "being *grieved* for the hardness of their hearts." At another time, when "Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting," he drove them out, expostulated with these mercenary traders, and virtually chastised those of higher station by whom they were countenanced; but his solemn remonstrance, "make not my father's house a house of merchandize," evinces the motive of his proceeding, and its character is more than justified in the prophecy to which his disciples adverted, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Let, however, the entire life of our Lord be regarded in evidence that he was as far superior to the petty resentments, the mean jealousies, the unworthy passions of our nature, as the heavens are above the earth; nay more, that in all that is pure in principle, ennobling in character, and heavenly in spirit, he has left us an example, "that we should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously."

LECTURE III.

DANIEL II. 14—30.

- Verse 14.—Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise MEN of Babylon :
- 15.—He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why *is* the decree *so* hasty from the king. Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.
- 16.—Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time and that he would show the king the interpretation.
- 17.—Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions ;
- 18.—That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret, that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise MEN of Babylon.

Another proof is here supplied of Daniel's "counsel and wisdom." He first inquires of Arioch into the facts of the case, and then, by his judicious remonstrances, induces that officer to suspend the execution of the king's decree, till he had obtained an interview with Nebuchadnezzar.

When we compare the request that "the king would give him time," with the royal language to the assembled magicians, "I know

of certainty that ye would gain the time ;” we perceive not only an evidence of the estimation in which Daniel continued to be held at court—for it appears that his wish was immediately granted—but a demonstration, in the continued and effective superintendence of Divine Providence, that “the king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water : he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

Daniel stimulated the companions of his captivity, to apply to the only source of wisdom, in the present emergency. He and they had a better hope than is found in any of those resources to which others commonly repair in seasons of perplexity and tribulation. The men of the world either aim “to steep their senses in forgetfulness,” or to soothe their anxious spirits by trusting in possibilities, casualties, and changes ; the servant of God withdraws from the turbulent scene around him, to hold converse with the mighty mover and supreme disposer of all events. His language is, “God is a refuge for us ; a very present help in time of trouble.”

The importance of prayer, then, at all times, but more especially in seasons of impending danger or during deep affliction, is apparent. While there are many scriptural grounds of confidence whenever we approach the mercy-seat, some promises apply with singular and exclusive force to the “time of need,” “the

time of trouble," the hour of "passing through the waters and the floods."

Daniel not only evinced his desire, by the invitation given to his companions, that they should participate in the credit and the safety he expected, but showed *a profound sense of the necessity of united, as well as importunate prayer*. He requested them *all* to solicit "mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret." While the individual supplication of "the righteous man availeth much;" union in prayer is adapted to increase its fervency, and, through grace, to promote its success. And, while it is adapted to our social nature, and suited to our circumstances of common necessity, it has the express assurance of divine blessing.

The proceeding of Daniel bespeaks *strong faith*. He was convinced not only of the omniscience of the being he proposed to address, but of his readiness to hear their entreaties. His faith adapted itself to the exigency, and pierced through the clouds of sense; and doubtless he experienced what the vigorous exercise of that principle is adapted to impart, "joy and peace in believing."

Daniel directed them to pray concerning this secret, that he and his friends might not perish with the Chaldean magicians, because *he formed a proper estimate of life*, while he

felt solicitude for the honor of his God. The preservation of life is an important good, and cannot be disregarded without palpable folly and sin; but even this is to be sought, as it is evident that it was in the present instance, as an instrument of advancing the cause of true religion. If duty had demanded its sacrifice, they were willing; if it required its preservation, they were thankful. Hence we should learn to estimate the value of life chiefly as a means of usefulness. Hear an apostle: "For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith."

Verse 19.—Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

That God should disclose the secrets of futurity to mankind, is an evidence of wonderful condescension. They might with perfect propriety have remained wrapt in the impenetrable mystery of his own conceptions and purposes, and no being, however exalted, could have possessed the right, or, independently of divine instruction, the capacity to explore the depths of inexistent time. The revelations of Deity respecting the events of

ages yet to come when those revelations were given, furnish indubitable proof of the character of the individual who held a commission from heaven, and a permanent demonstration of the truth of religion when the prophetic statement is recorded. Posterity, to whom it is thus transmitted, have the opportunity of comparing the prediction with the event; and as none but the omniscient mind could know futurity, none but those to whom he might see fit to unfold it, could become acquainted with its transactions.

But this passage must be regarded particularly as an encouraging instance of *answer to prayer*. This is a subject of great interest in every point of view. It essentially involves our comfort, well-being, and hopes; but it has been much perplexed both by the plausible sophistries of the indevout, and the sincere and sometimes distressing scruples of the pious. It has been asked, whether the impertinency of so insignificant and unworthy a being as man can change the previous determinations of an immutable being? In this supposed difficulty it is forgotten that God has inseparably connected the means with the end. If he has decreed that certain blessings shall be given, he has equally decreed they shall be sought for in prayer. Though no event can be casual with the Deity, all events are conditional to us. If I am diseas-

ed or in adversity, the infinite being foreknows whether I shall recover from sickness, or rise from poverty ; but this does not alter the obligation or the necessity of sending for the physician, or using vigorous efforts. The earth shall be productive, but the seed must be sown. It is the will of God that we should pray, and, whether we can explain or not the nature of the efficacy, it is real, promised and apparent.

It has also been inquired whether we may expect an answer to every prayer, and at once? This must depend on the nature of the case in both respects. We ought never to pray for any thing which we deem a good, especially for any temporal blessing, without an absolute surrender of our views, desires, and anticipations, to the divine will, with regard either to the blessing itself, or to the time and mode of its bestowment. If we solicit spiritual blessings in general, we may do so without reserve ; but particular gifts, either piritual or temporal, can only be sought specifically and for special purposes, in the spirit of acquiescence in the decisions of perfect wisdom.

These are circumstances in which the honor of God is so obviously concerned, as well as the happiness of his people, that we may fully expect immediate answers to prayer.—Of this we have many examples in Scripture,

besides that of Daniel in the instance before us. Living as we do under the Christian dispensation, let us constantly realize that name and those merits through which alone we can successfully apply to “the throne of grace;” and let us continually cultivate that spirituality of mind which will prompt to unceasing pleadings with our heavenly Father, for blessings which Christ is exalted to bestow.

Verse 20.—Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his:

21.—And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22.—He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23.—I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter.

In the preceding verse, Daniel is said to have “blessed the God of heaven;” and this paragraph contains the form of words in which he expressed his adoration. The whole is characterized by great simplicity and fervor, and bespeaks a mind penetrated with awe, replete with devotion, and filled with emotions of grateful joy.

1. He adverts emphatically to the *name* of God. Although this, and similar language,

may be considered as a general appeal to the perfections of the Deity, and to the veracity of his promises, yet it ought never to be forgotten that a peculiar sacredness has, from the earliest ages, been attached to the term which was employed by his own authority to designate the eternal Being; and to this it becomes us always in prayer to cherish the most reverential regard. "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (*Al-Shaddai*, that is, *self-sufficient*); but, by my name **JEHOVAH** (that is, self-existent, and the cause of all being), was I not known to them," *Exod. vi. 3.* This proclamation of the Divine name was not published till the time of Moses. After the captivity, the Jews, out of a superstitious veneration, ceased to pronounce it; and they say that this name was only uttered once in the temple, on the great day of expiation, and not at all subsequently to the destruction of the temple. How awfully criminal is the conduct of those who dare to employ any one of the appellations of the Great Supreme in blasphemous imprecations; and with what "godly fear" does it become his sinful creatures to approach him even in devotion, and while privileged to plead the merits of the Saviour as the ground of access!

2. Daniel refers also to the *direct agency of Providence in the conduct of human affairs.* 'The

blessed God is represented not only as possessing the "wisdom" to contrive and to superintend, but the "might" to "change the times and the seasons," and to exalt or depress the potentates of earth. With this truth impressed upon our minds, let us always proceed whenever we propose to unlock the treasures of history; treasures, indeed, they can only be, when through its enlightening influence, they are justly appreciated; otherwise they are but an accumulation of trifles. Their value is to be estimated by their utility; and that utility can only be evinced by the illustrations they afford of the government of God. Of this we may feel assured, that whatever darkness may involve our conceptions, "the light," as it is here expressed, "dwelleth with him."

3. Daniel humbly acknowledges *the especial favor bestowed upon himself and his companions, in the disclosure of that mystery which the king demanded.* It is instructive to observe how he comprehends his brethren in the efficacy of those prayers which they had mutually offered, and in answer to which the secret was unfolded. Religion emancipated him from the bondage of selfishness, and freed him from the littleness of pride—"Who has made known unto me now what we desired."

The appeal, "O thou God of my fathers," reminds us that the recollections of piety are

the most solemn and endearing that earth can afford. Some are privileged to look back upon an extended succession of holy ancestry, and to recount the names of multitudes endeared by relationship to themselves, as well as distinguished for their faith, who now form a part of the celestial society. Their sun is set, but their example continues to shed its holy twilight around the horizon of life, and cheers them on their pilgrimage.

This phraseology must, to a Jew, have been peculiarly significant. It inspired reflections on his covenanted relationship to God, by virtue of his connexion with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The promises flowed in the channel of his descent; and he felt himself allied to those whose histories were interwoven with the earliest transactions between man and his Maker. He thus felt at once the bond that united him with the splendid past, and the more splendid future—with the patriarchs of former times, and the sons of light at all periods—with all that was glorious in heavenly revelations and inspired predictions.

Especially did this exiled servant of the Most High cherish these sentiments, and refer with ardent emotions to this beloved and venerated name, in his present circumstances. Country, kindred, home, religion—a thousand thoughts which language fails to express,

would rush upon him in confluent tides of feeling, while he recorded the expressive words—" *God of my Fathers!*"

- 24.—Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him, Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation.
- 25.—Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation.
- 26.—The king answered, and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?
- 27.—Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king;
- 28.—But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;
- 29.—(As for thee O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed what should come to pass hereafter; and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass:
- 30.—But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.)

If, in the manner which Arioch is said to have introduced Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, we perceive *the courtier*, willing to embrace an

opportunity of ingratiating himself into the affections of his sovereign, we need not be surprised, especially as the prophet had solicited his interference. But let us improve the circumstance, by using it as a motive for humiliation before God, that we are so little solicitous of the highest place in his approbation, and so little zealous in promoting the interests of his glorious empire!

The answer of Daniel to the king's question, whether he was able to make known the dream and the interpretation, furnishes a new demonstration of his superior character. Having intimated that the astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers were incapable of revealing the mystery by their arts of divination, he does not proceed to affirm his own ability, but imputes the discovery to the "God in heaven that revealeth secrets;" wishing himself to be regarded as simply the channel of communication; and, to prevent all possibility of misapprehension, he reiterates the statement, and insists that the secret was not disclosed to him for any wisdom he possessed more than any living. How opposite is this to that spirit of self-exaltation which is frequently evinced by persons under circumstances of far less powerful temptation! What a contrast to the disposition to bend every trifling circumstance into subserviency to personal distinction, and to give a false co-

loring, as is too common, to facts, in order to flatter a selfish vanity, or promote a worldly interest! Let us beware of falsehood in all its Protean shapes. It may lurk in the *implication*, as well as stand prominently forward in direct affirmations. Let us forever renounce all studied ambiguities that are calculated to give a false impression; and be willing rather to suffer disparagement by excessive caution, than aim to acquire honor by exaggerated statements, or a self-commending phraseology.—“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

LECTURE IV.

DANIEL II. 31—35.

- Verse 31.—Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof *was* terrible.
- 32.—This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,
- 33.—His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.
- 34.—Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.
- 35.—Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-flowers; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

By taking into consideration the origin and progress of symbolical language, we shall be assisted to appreciate the character of this remarkable dream.

The earliest attempts at writing were, probably, rude outlines of external objects, as trees and animals; whence arose the method of conveying abstract and moral ideas by the use of signs or symbols, as the figure of a lion to signify courage, that of a serpent to

represent cunning, and that of a leafless tree to describe winter. Sculptured or painted outlines of this kind were anciently exhibited on the walls of temples, by the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, and many other nations. Hieroglyphics (i. e. *sacred engravings*) abound also on the monuments, coins and medals of former times, both before and after the invention of the alphabet; and hence the human figure has been often introduced by historical and poetical writers to represent cities, people, the progress or decline of empires, or the relative importance of different parts of a government.

As, therefore, the blessed God has seen fit in Scripture to describe his own conduct by means of terms in language, not indeed, strictly applicable, but generally understood; so, in accommodation to the previous conceptions of mankind, and their pictorial method of conveying abstract ideas, or the narrative of great events to each other, a colossal human form was presented to the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, which, upon being recalled to his memory, was adapted to impress the monarch's mind with the probability and consistent clearness of Daniel's interpretation. He would easily admit that it was a suitable emblem of political power, and political vicissitude. His mind was thus prepared for the particular explanations of the prophet. Let

us admire the wisdom, and adore the goodness of God, in so adapting his communications to the character of the human mind, that subjects of mysterious grandeur and awful interest are made intelligible even to beings so inferior and unworthy!

Verse 36.—This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37.—Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38.—And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.

39.—And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40.—And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*—and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41.—And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42.—And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron and part of clay; so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43.—And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44.—And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:

and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45.—Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

The first monarchy pointed out in this brilliant image, was the *Chaldean* or *Babylonian*, of which Babylon was the metropolis, and Nebuchadnezzar the most celebrated in the succession of kings. In the language of prophecy, *king* comprehends *kingdom*, that is, inclusively, the royal person or family, and his empire. We learn from history, that at this period, the monarchy in question extended over Assyria, Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, Arabia, and Palestine. The immense opulence of the Chaldean government, and the magnificence of the chief city in particular, have led interpreters to regard this description, “thou art this head of gold,” as expressive of the splendor, no less than of the priority of this kingdom, in the prophetic series.

The pride of eastern sovereigns has always induced them to assume the most pompous titles, and to admit none into their presence who should hesitate to use them; but if Daniel felt himself compelled to call this haughty potentate, “king of kings,” he took care to

add, with a fidelity and a piety truly admirable, "the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom;"—thus pointing out to Nebuchadnezzar that he was entirely indebted for his possessions, influence, and glory, to the great Supreme; and insinuating, at this solemn moment, a lesson of the greatest practical importance both to the individual he was addressing, and to all who might hereafter be called to sway the sceptre.

"The breast and the arms of silver," are said to be emblematic of "another and inferior kingdom," which was to "arise after" that of Nebuchadnezzar. This was the *Medo-Persian*. The arms represent the two kings of the Medes and Persians, whose dominions were united under Cyrus, when he captured Babylon in the year B. C. 538. By the term *inferior*, some suppose there is a reference to the moral character of the kings; others refer it to the rapidly declining glory and short duration of that empire. From Cyrus to the last monarch elapsed only 200 years. According to the Arabic version, however, the meaning is simply, that this empire should be next in order; and perhaps the best principle of interpretation is to disregard the mere comparative value of the metals which compose the image.

The third kingdom is indicated by "the belly and thighs of brass." It is said to "bear

rule over all the earth." This alludes to the *Macedonian* or *Greek* empire, founded by Alexander the Great. His conquests were so extensive as fully to justify the description ; for Europe, Asia, and Africa, were made sensible of his power. The epithet of *brazen-coated Greeks*, by which they were distinguished, on account of their eminence in military prowess, seems appropriate to the vision, though no stress need be laid upon it. The Persian monarchy terminated in the overthrow of Darius Codomanus, at Arbela, in the year B. C. 331. After his death (B. C. 323), the empire was divided by Alexander among his four generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The *thighs* of brass have been thought to represent the kingdoms of the Seleucidæ, in Syria, and the Lagidæ, in Egypt ; which constituted the last branches of the Greek empire.

The fourth kingdom is pointed out by the image having "legs of iron ; and feet, part of iron and part of clay." The interpretation is, that it shall be "strong as iron," and shall "break in pieces and bruise." To the Macedonian or Grecian succeeded the *Roman empire*, whose iron temperament, evinced alike in the valor and hardness of the people, and the vigor, perseverance, and oppressive consequences of their military achievements, and whose division into the Eastern and Western

empires, verify the two legs of the image. This emblem may also have a further and more specific reference to those Imperial persecutions of the church of Christ, which have spread their sanguinary hue over the pages of history, stained the memory of their perpetrators with the deepest dye of guilt, and accumulated upon their heads a weight of fearful responsibility.

The feet and toes being "part of iron and part of clay," exhibits the division of the kingdom, and its finally enfeebled state, "being partly strong and partly weak;" through the relaxation of ancient discipline, and by "mingling with the seed of men"—or, in consequence of the intermarriages and leagues with the nations that inundated them from the North, but with whom, nevertheless, they could not amalgamate. The toes may represent the kingdoms which resulted from the entrance of the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, who were at first permitted to settle within the Roman precincts, though they afterwards become independent. But the Roman and Northern nations were so dissimilar in their habits and character, that they never could form one uniform people.

It may be inquired why only *four empires* are exhibited in this prophecy? The reason probably is, that those were the empires with whom the Jews came in contact, and by whom

they were oppressed. The Turks, indeed, conquered Palestine, but not while the Jews held possession of the country.

The "stone which smote the image," is explained by Daniel as referring to the setting up of the kingdom, which is to stand upon the ruins of preceding empires.

Bishop Chandler has justly remarked, that, by the stone being a species of mineral altogether different from that of which the image was composed, it was implied, that "this new kingdom should be not only different in number, or a distinct empire, but of another nature from that of the image." The concurrent opinion of the best expositors may justify us in assuming that the stone which was "cut out of the mountain without hands," and "smote the image," is an adumbration of the **KINGDOM OF CHRIST**. The correspondence of the figure with the facts, and with other descriptions in the sacred volume, appears sufficiently to verify this application. Bishop Newton remarks, that "the fathers generally apply this to Christ himself but it should rather," he says "be understood of the kingdom of Christ, which was formed out of the Roman empire, not by number of hands, or strength of armies, but without human means and the virtue of second causes." It seems more strictly consonant to the spirit of this prophetic vision, in which the head of

gold is to be regarded as comprehending Nebuchadnezzar and his dominions, to consider both Christ personally, and Christ in his government, that is, Christianity, as equally represented. The term *stone* is frequently applied to Christ in prophecy. Compare Gen. xlix. 24, Isa. xxviii. 16, Psalm cxviii. 22, Matt. xxi. 42, Mark xii. 10, Luke xx. 17, Acts iv. 10, 11, Eph. ii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 4—8. The word *mountain*, into which the stone is said to expand, is also employed as descriptive of the establishment of the Saviour's dominion in "the last days," Isa. ii. 2. The stone is described as "cut out of the mountain," which may be conceived to refer to the locality of the kingdom, namely, the mountainous country of Judea. It is further affirmed, to be cut or torn out "without hands," that is, without human hands: it was to be accomplished solely by the power of God. An illustrative expression may be found in the epistle to the Corinthians. The body to be possessed at the resurrection is characterized as "a house not made with hands," 2 Cor. v. 1.

The stone is seen to "break in pieces the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold;" and they became "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors," which "the wind carried away, that no place was found for them." The expression alludes to the threshing-floors in Eastern countries, which were usually placed

On the tops of hills. In such a situation the chaff would be easily dispersed; and thus a striking image is supplied, expressive of total demolition. Literally, the kingdoms represented in the colossal statue, fell *successively*, and only during the progress of ages; so that the several metallic emblems were not in history "broken in pieces *together*." This account, however, has been supposed to find its verification in the fact that the political despotism and pagan idolatry common to all, and which might be regarded as concentrated in the last, were destroyed in the subversion of the Roman empire; but, perhaps it may be sufficient to consider it simply, as a *general representation of the entire overthrow*, at whatever period, of all these kingdoms, their branches, and dependencies. The whole is, in reality, a map of time to come, or as Bishop Hurd observes, "the four kingdoms of Daniel form a prophetic geography, being considered, in the eye of prophecy, as coexistent, and as still alive." It would scarcely have comported with the dignity of the description, to have exhibited the predicted ruin in detail; and Daniel describes as with one stroke of his pen, the glance of his prophetic eye over the ages and revolutions of a mysterious futurity.

Of "the kingdom of heaven," it is declared that "it shall never be destroyed," as the preceding empires were; and that it "shall not

be left to other people," but shall become "a great mountain," and "fill the whole earth." The prophecy also intimates that "it shall stand forever."

Dr. Homes remarks, that "the meaning of the continuance of this monarchy of Christ *forever*, doth not signify that it should never have any end, as if Christ should never lay down his power of government; for the contrary is expressed in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28;* but the meaning is this; first, it shall never be *destroyed* (v. 44), that is, shall not end with a devastation and desolation, as the former monarchies did; secondly, it shall not be '*left to other people*;' that is, other people shall never succeed the saints to possess it, as another people successively succeeded and possessed the other monarchies; thirdly, that the end of this monarchy of Christ (so far as it may have an end), is only *formally*, of the *power or mode* of government by Christ, who resigns his power to God himself: not *materially*, for the saints shall continue for ever, eternally happy, under the wing of the beatifical vision of God himself." This may be regarded as a correct interpretation of the phrase in question. In strictness, the king-

* "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.—And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

dom of Christ in the external form of it, will be delivered up to the Father, and terminate ; but in reality, as to the identity of its subjects, it will continue. The earthly will flow into and intermingle with the heavenly population, merging into it, like a stream into the ocean, or a morning beam into perfect day. It will, therefore, incomparably surpass all other empires in extent and duration ; being both universal and immortal.

Brightly and gloriously does this vision arise before the eye of faith ! How insignificant are all governments, even the greatest, to that of the Saviour, which not only combines every element of true grandeur in its constitution, but embraces in its range of influence unnumbered nations and countless myriads of souls ! What fading pieces of successive pageantry are “the kingdoms of this world, and all the glory of them,” to the everlasting reign of the Son of God ! To be a subject of this kingdom, to share in its blessedness, to be eternally associated with its people, and their king must be to be elevated to the height of all glory—to the very summit of our intellectual, sanctified, and immortal nature.

In those moments of spiritual enjoyment of which the Christian is sometimes conscious in contemplating this scene of transcendent attraction ; how vain do all other subjects ap-

pear, even those which otherwise possess the deepest general or personal interest! Into what a speck and an atom does our ascent into this worldly theme appear to sink this "present evil world!" What contemptible nothingness seems to characterize not only all that is common and even appropriate in the pursuits of life, but even all that is most valued, most eagerly sought, and most loudly applauded! Still it is needful to remember that the most delightful and splendid visions of the future, ought not to divert us from the duties of the present; that we must not aim to "build tabernacles" on the mount, for the mere indulgence of a contemplative piety, but willingly descend, though with sanctified emotions, into the realities of life; and that activity in the service of Christ, combined with meditation upon his character, a sense of his love, and a conscious participation in the glory of his kingdom, constitutes at once the most privileged and the most useful condition of existence.

To this practical application of the subject we may be the more incited by recollecting, in connexion with the fading nature of all earthly dominions and governments, though they embrace several successive generations, the still greater fragility and brevity of individual life. If empires occupy but a comparative moment in the flux of ages, what shall

we think of our “appointed season on the earth?” Is it not a temporary bubble on the stream; or, as the Scriptures express it, “a vapor, that vanishes away?” But yet it has everlasting associations; and those associations originate in present character, which is therefore the elementary principle of our immortal destiny. The question whether we love Christ supremely, or the world—whether we live to promote his glory, and advance the interests of his church, or subserve our own selfishness, prejudice and passion,—whether we are obedient to him, or “serve divers lust and vanities,”—will soon be answered, if any of us should now feel repugnant to a direct and conscientious reply, in our enthronement amidst the splendors of the celestial kingdom, or our depression to the depths of infernal darkness and despair.

LECTURE V.

CONTINUATION OF DANIEL II. 36—45,
AND 46—49.

Having, in the preceding Lecture, given an explanation of the symbolical language of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which harmonizes in general with the opinions of the most distinguished commentators, I have left for present consideration the question of TIME, as indicated by the words "in the days of these kings," and subsequent expressions. In referring to the sentiments of others, be it understood that they are not pleaded as *authorities*; but while pursuing our own course of investigation, it is satisfactory to find the substantial concurrence of those who have given the greatest attention to the prophetic portions of Holy Writ, and who, though they have been sometimes charged with following each other implicitly, afford ample evidence, in their differences upon subordinate points, of the independent character of their individual inquiries. Never having seen the sub-

ject before us exhibited in a precisely similar manner, a candid consideration may be fairly demanded, while, after a very careful research, I proceed to give the result of my own decided judgment. Let us, however, "wrestle" in prayer to the "Father of Lights," that if in any thing we err, our minds may be irradiated and rectified by the more abundant illuminations of his Holy Spirit.

Some interpret the predictions, "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed," (v. 44.) and "thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," (v. 45) as referring exclusively to the final period of the world, when the ten monarchies, which arose in the decline of the Roman empire, shall approximate the termination of their power; consequently they allege that the prophecy is to be regarded as still waiting for its accomplishment: others believe that the allusion is to the period of the first coming of Christ, and the establishment of Christianity, which they deem the "setting up of the kingdom," or the commencement of that spiritual dominion of the Son of God in the hearts of men, which will result in the glory of the millennial dispensation. The question therefore resolves itself into this, whether we are to con-

sider the kingdom of Christ as established at the introduction of his gospel, or whether it is yet to be begun by his personal appearance to introduce his kingdom and commence his reign. The sentiments which I have been led to entertain on this subject are developed in the following particulars.

1. As in the common language of prophecy, *kings* are to be taken as representing *kingdoms*, and as in this vision *four kingdoms* only are named, and the image is presented in the prophetic dream as *a splendid whole*, it seems most natural, if not inevitable, to understand the expression as referring to one of the four kingdoms in question, that is, necessarily, the last of them; which is, the Roman empire. Although the toes are mentioned as well as the feet, and although this figure may find its exemplification in the subdivision of that empire into the smaller states, which arose after the northern incursions, yet these are not specified in this part of the prophecy; that is, the toes are not mentioned as kingdoms, while the empires are. By "*these kings*," therefore, must be intended the kings, that is, *kingdoms* which have been previously enumerated. Consequently, "in the days of these kings," means in the time of the Roman empire.

2. That the prediction of the stone does not refer exclusively to the ultimate period of the world, appears evident from the distinct-

ness of the intimation that it would strike the image *upon the feet*, not upon the toes : the latter are mentioned *after* the former, as, according to the general construction of the statue, *subsequent in time*. Consequently, the empire of Rome was to be smitten when in its strength, or *before* the division into several kingdoms. This interpretation is verified by the fact, that Christ was born in the reign of Augustus, and the apostolic labors extended to the period of the commencing decline of Roman power.

3. To consider these representations as solely applicable to the period of the *second coming of Christ*, would be to suppose that the whole of his first manifestation, and of all that resulted from it in the early diffusion of Christianity, and its subsequent and existing extension were entirely overlooked by the spirit of prophecy. The great events belonging to the history of Christianity for nineteen or twenty centuries, would not then acquire even the notice of the least important transaction.—But can we really conceive that the first appearance of Christ, which in its character was more remarkable, and in its moral results infinitely more magnificent than all the glory which can be supposed to invest the political empires of the world, were their glory to be viewed as in their combined and concentrated effulgence ;—can it be presumed that the

Saviour's manifestation in our nature, the missionary labors of his apostles, the spread and subsequent influence of his religion for successive ages, should be kept out of view, and as it were forgotten, in this map of future time? Was there indeed no place in the scene for the wonderful revealings of incarnate love?

4. It has already been shown that the term *stone* has a specific reference to the person, work and influence of the Redeemer. It may be said, that the reference would be no less personal were it presumed to adumbrate his final appearing; but—

5. The comparative insignificance of a stone, seems more accordant with other representations in Scripture of his personal meanness, as well as the insignificance of Christianity in its first promulgation, than is consistent with the inspired representations of his ultimate appearance. He was "a root out of dry ground;" he had "no form or comeliness;" he was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It is scarcely conceivable, that the ultimate appearance of Christ "in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with him," can be made to comport with this emblem, which so well accords with the lowliness of his first advent, and the contracted sphere of the gospel in its early propagation.

6. The "*setting up* of a kingdom," is phraseology which well harmonizes with the his-

torical fact. It implies time and labor, such as is usually bestowed on important works ; and admits of an easy explanation in the conflict of opposing parties and principles, during the period of what may be termed the commencement of Christianity. The heathen empire of Rome was forcibly struck when the apostles fulfilled their Lord's commission, in going forth "to preach the gospel to every creature," and fell to pieces, when Constantine, in A. D. 331 issued an edict, commanding the destruction of all heathen temples.— It has been alleged, that *smiting* the image, and breaking it in pieces, is ill suited to the evangelical account of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ, and the holy subduing influences of Christianity. This objection arises out of a contracted view of the subject ; for however mild the spirit of our divine Master, and of our holy religion, the diffusion of its principles inflicts a *blow*, tremendous and destructive, upon the vice, infidelity, and superstition of the world. What is gentle may yet be powerful. Of this, nature itself affords ample illustration.

7. *The growth of the stone into a mountain*, is another evidence that the spirit of prophecy intended to represent a gradual increase of Christianity, rather than a splendid manifestation, for the purpose of an instantaneous and universal diffusion of millennial glory and

influence. It is difficult to perceive by what possible construction of words the figure of "a stone becoming a mountain," can be made exclusively to represent the circumstances of Christ's *second* advent; but if we consider it to describe the progression or growth of the religion of Jesus, from the period of its promulgation, to its predestined universality, it seems to correspond with the manner and degree of its prevalence to the present time, and the general expectation of the Christian church, arising from this and similar predictions, with regard to the splendid future.

One objection has been made to this view of the subject, which has in it some plausibility, but which, nevertheless, appears upon examination to be devoid of force. How, it is inquired, can it be affirmed that the kingdom of Christ has been gradually extended, so as to be likely to fill the earth, when we consider the frequent decay of its influence, and the narrow boundaries within which it is even now, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, confined? To this it may be replied, that, in the interpretation of prophecy, it is requisite to take large and comprehensive views of time and space. It is not to individual objects, so much as to great outlines and prominent events, that our attention is to be directed. Prophecy places us as on the summit of a lofty rock, whence we are invited to survey

an immense expanse, skirted by a dim and undefinable horizon. It is not the figure or the particular movement of the billows of this ocean we are to regard, so much as the mighty whole : it is not so much the advance or retrocession of *each wave*, as the progress of *the tide itself*, which is to claim our attention.—Christianity may flow or ebb in respect to its influence, in particular places or times ; but the question regards not what may be the state of this or that country at a given period, or even whether a succeeding period presents Christianity as more extended geographically, than in the age which preceded it ; the question mainly regards the stability of its principles, the various directions it may take, and the indications it may contain within itself, or which may be made manifest by the operations of Providence, of its ultimate and universal prevalence.

To require that we should vindicate the prophetic statement as significant of a gradual progress of religion in the earth, by showing that it has literally, from year to year, or even from one generation to another, increased in an uninterrupted succession of obvious events, constituting a regular diffusion, is surely too severe a demand ; and is like asking, in order to verify the vision, that we should mark the dimensions of the stone each day or each year, as it is *becoming* a mountain. To take

another scriptural image, which describes the progress of truth, it is like "a grain of mustard seed," or it is like "a handful of corn that was sown in the earth." The progress of vegetation may suffer many interruptions, and may seem at times to recede and decline, while it is in fact upon the whole advancing to the maturity of verdure, or of harvest : so the fluctuations which affect the cause of Christ, in its different localities or subdivisions, do not prevent its steady progress to universal dominion.

It has been urged, as an objection to this interpretation, that there does not seem to have been much growth towards the mountain since the apostolic age. Christianity, it is intimated, is far, very far, from filling the whole earth. But the remark is inapplicable, for two reasons : first, that *when* the stone is to *become* a great mountain, and to *fill* the earth, is not stated, nor whether it shall be throughout the entire period a gradual process, nor whether it may not remain for centuries without any very apparent enlargement, and then rapidly swell to the dimensions of a mountain ; and secondly, that comparing the present times with the past, there is both a real increase of religion as to geographical extent in islands, kingdoms and continents, many of them unknown to exist till later ages, and others remaining until recently altogether

unenlightened; and there are also elements of increase at work, and prognostications of it in the moral heavens, to be seen in the activities of the Christian world.

8. A further confirmation of our views is derived from the Saviour's assurance to the disciples before his ascension, "All power is given unto me in heaven and IN EARTH." The idea that this power should not be *exercised*, nor even *begin to be exercised*, for nearly two thousand years, seems inharmonious with the plain implication of the passage, and unsuitable to the character of the Christian dispensation. Often indeed it has been said, not without sarcasm, consistently with the former statement, that if Christ assumed his power at that time, it must be confessed to be very limited, and his dominion at present is inexplicably small. How, it is asked, can he have exercised his power, or commenced his kingdom, when so few amongst mankind have hitherto yielded to his authority? Where is this kingdom to be found? The question proceeds on the false assumption, that to verify the promise, it is necessary to suppose that he must at once exercise all the power he possesses, or at least have a large dominion. But we recognize the existence and the manifestation of that power in every converted soul. It is the putting forth of a spiritual energy and influence which none but himself posses-

ses; the sunrise of that glory which will at last illuminate the universe. It is as truly a display of that power which is peculiarly his own, as if he were actually, as he will be eventually, advanced to the throne of illimitable sovereignty and rule.

Will any one who is capable of appreciating the worth of an immortal soul, its degenerate state, the curse that has fallen upon it, the misery of which it is susceptible, and to which it is exposed by sin, and on the other hand, its possible blessedness, as redeemed and sanctified, in the mysterious career of eternity—will any one, duly impressed with these views, refuse to estimate this moral dominion, even in a single instance, as really greater and more glorious than the political or temporal government of a world? Other things being equal, numbers may unquestionably form an item in the grand account of empire, but is it the only or the chief consideration? Is it a question of arithmetic or of morals? Is Christ declared to be a king because of the multitude, or the character of the minds over whom he reigns, or is destined to reign? Is it not an anomalous idea that though already millions have owned his sceptre, he has no kingdom, because it has not hitherto included the universal world?—Yes, even millions have obeyed him, and accumulating multitudes are still flocking to

the standard of salvation. "Christianity," says Gibbon, "erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or the limits of the Roman empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in arts and learning as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies, has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients." Had this celebrated historian lived to witness the evangelical and missionary labors and successes of the present day, and could he have duly appreciated them, his picture might have been far more glowing and illustrative.

If, therefore, the erection of the kingdom of Christ be referred to the period of the millennium, or of his second appearance, it follows that at present *Christ has not commenced his kingdom*. I am aware that this is the sentiment of many excellent men, who formed upon the supposition an entirely new scheme of prophecy. The source of this fallacy appears to be the exclusive and uniform application of the phrase "kingdom of God," or "of heaven," to the *final* manifestation of the

Saviour. In the New Testament, however, it is obviously employed with reference to the establishment of the Christian religion by Christ and his apostles. The kingdom of God, observes the late Mr. R. Hall, is “a phrase which is constantly employed in Scripture to denote that state of things which is placed under the avowed administration of the Messiah, and which consequently could not precede his personal appearance. But during his residence on earth, until his resurrection, this kingdom is uniformly represented as future, though near at hand.” (Works vol. ii. p. 190.)

Let us seriously consider the following citations. “If I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God *is* come unto you.” (Matt. xii. 28.) That our Saviour did eject demons *at that time* is unquestionable. The Apostles were directed to say to those among whom they performed miracles, “The kingdom of God *is* come nigh unto you.” (Luke x. 9.) The evangelist Luke thus expresses himself, “The kingdom of God *is* within you.” This intimates its existence at the time, in the hearts of believers, and accords with the apostle’s statement when writing to the Romans: “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. xiv. 17.) But the true rendering of the ori-

ginal is, "The kingdom of God *is among you*," which is very express as to this point. An attempt has been made to neutralize the force of this declaration, by referring to the occasion of the parable spoken by our Lord respecting the nobleman who went into a far country. He had said to Zaccheus, "'This day is salvation come to this house;" and "because he was *nigh to Jerusalem*, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear;" he, correcting this notion by the representation of the ten talents given to be employed for the benefit of the owner of an estate in his absence. The sense is sufficiently plain. They thought as he had said *salvation is come*, and as he was *going to Jerusalem*, that the temporal kingdom which they imagined he came to establish, was about to be set up in the Jewish capital. He intimates that they did not comprehend the nature of his kingdom, for in fact its being *revealed* or *made to appear* (which is the sense of the original) in its fullest glory would be at another time, and in a different manner from what they anticipated. The term *revealed* or *made to appear*, may be viewed as strikingly illustrative, by contrasting it with the fact of his frequent efforts to *conceal* his miracles and his glory. In writing to the Colossians, Paul adverts to the conversion of believers, in these words, "who *hath* delivered

us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us *into the kingdom* of his dear Son." Although, therefore, the kingdom of Christ will be inexpressibly more glorious than it was at its commencement, or than it has hitherto appeared, it seems impossible scripturally to deny its present existence, or that the stone has begun the predicted work of demolition, which will issue in its own expansion into "a great mountain."

For the more complete elucidation of this prophecy, let us advert to the corresponding vision contained in the *seventh* chapter, which we may do without unduly anticipating the explanations to be hereafter given.

Having represented by symbolical figures, different from those already mentioned, the succession of empires, Daniel describes an appearance which he beheld of "the Ancient of days" coming to judge the power which had been pre-eminent for idolatry, will-worship, and a persecuting spirit, and to take away the dominion of the other nations, though their political existence should be prolonged. This is evidently a magnificent personification of the Deity as "the Father everlasting." The epithet "Son of man" points out with equal precision and certainty, "Christ the Lord," who is represented as coming "in the clouds of heaven" to the Ancient of days,

to receive "dominion, glory, and a kingdom" which should be indestructible. Upon asking of one that stood by for an explanation of this extraordinary scene, the prophet is told that "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." It is added that "the kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Here it is observable that though the Ancient of days is said to give the *Son of man* a kingdom; the saints are characterized as the saints of the *Most High*; and in the 27th verse, the kingdom which they possess and which he has *given* is, nevertheless, still declared to be *his* kingdom, so that all dominions shall serve and obey *him*. The reason of this I presume to be, that, as Son of God, Christ will reign over the mediatorial kingdom, which will finally be, as the apostle declares, delivered up to the Father, (1 Cor. xv. 24), at which period the outward form or mode of Messiah's separate government will subside into the universal and immortal empire of Deity. This idea appears to be expressed at the close of the 18th verse by the addition and reduplication of the words "for ever"—"even for ever and ever."

The saints of the Most High are said to "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom." The former expression must either signify secular or spiritual subjugation—a military or moral conquest. But the progress of the gospel, or the possession which it will ultimately obtain, cannot be supposed to be by the "right and power" of human prowess. No principle of christianity appears to suggest or to sanction the formation of armies to subjugate nations to its authority, and enforce its establishment by the sword. If, therefore, it be a moral or spiritual dominion, the "taking possession of the kingdom" must imply the prevalence of christianity over secular interests, idolatrous worship, and ecclesiastical domination. Christ will be acknowledged as universal king, and christians, or the saints, constitute his subjects. If the saints, then, are to *take* as well as *hold* possession of the kingdom, it must be either by the means of temporal power, or by the diffusion of their principles. Can we, then, in consistence with the nature of Christianity, suppose that this occupation is by any other means than the communication of knowledge, and the promotion of purity, good will, and obedience to Christ?

Let it be further examined what explanation he himself gave of the nature of his kingdom when his mistaking disciples, whose

minds were encumbered with Jewish prejudices and anticipations, disputed on the subject of their claims to priority in the kingdom of heaven. The question being proposed to Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The reply, upon the supposition that his kingdom was or would be temporal, whether it was to be understood as then or to be hereafter established, must naturally have contained an assurance that the greatest would be the individual nearest the royal person, and entrusted with the highest offices of the state. But what in reality was the answer; and does that answer accord with the idea of a temporal or a spiritual rule? "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." Compare Mark ix. 34, Luke ix. 46, Luke xxii. 24—26. When Jesus avowed himself as a king, in answer to the question of Pilate, he neither represented his kingdom as altogether future, nor as in its principles and forms of its administration, worldly. "My kingdom is not of this world." Great stress has been laid by some upon the term *now*, used in the concluding part of the same declaration. John xviii. 36. They plead that

the clause "*but now* is my kingdom not from hence" signifies, that it was not then begun. In the first announcement of this remarkable fact, the particle *now* is omitted. The misunderstanding may probably arise in some measure from the imperfect translation of the passage in our version; the force of the original is this: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom had been of this world, my adherents* would have prevented my falling into the hands of the Jews; but, as they did not, it is evident my kingdom is not of this world." Be it especially remarked that the words "then would my servants fight," are interposed between these members of the sentence, which seem tantamount to an explicit assurance of the spirituality, and of the commencement of his reign, otherwise they would be inapplicable. To render the time referred to the more obvious, he adds, "that I should not be delivered to the Jews;" which must unquestionably refer to himself personally, and the existing circumstances of his incipient kingdom. In further explanation of the subject, our Lord employed the following language:—"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you."—Matt. xx. 25, 26.†

* Vide *Campbell* in loco.

† To place our interpretation of John xvii. 26 in a most convincing

There seems to be only one point of difficulty in the prophecy of Daniel as contained in the seventh chapter, if we agree that the

light, as this passage has been so often perverted from its true meaning, we may be allowed to subjoin a critical examination of the phraseology. The words in the original translated "but now my kingdom is not from hence," are *νῦν δὲ ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεθθεν*. The meaning of *νῦν δὲ* in the Greek is very clear, though in English the words *but now* are too concise and elliptical to be readily understood. Of the particle *νῦν* there are three distinct uses observable in both secular and sacred writers; for it cannot be said in this, as in some cases, that the phrase is differently employed in the scriptures and the writings of uninspired men. These three senses, which are again subdivided into more minute differences of meaning, are, 1. The *chronic*, when it is called an adverb of time: 2. The *hortatory*: 3. The *argumentative*. Of the first usage one example will be sufficient: John v. 25, *ἔρχεται, ὧρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν*, "the hour is come and now is;" where it manifestly could denote nothing but *time*. In the second sense, *νῦν* serves to give an impulse to a command or exhortation, and is used in such phrases as *φέρε νῦν, ἄγε νῦν*, "come now:" in Aristoph. Plut. 414, *σπεῦδε νῦν*, "make haste now." In cases similar to these, it is very commonly redundant, and is called by grammarians enclitic; that is, it is rather employed to make the word preceding it emphatic, than of any force in itself. Then, the *argumentative* *νῦν* is used with several shades of meaning and in various ways. Our confined limits will allow us to speak only of one, which may be called the adversative, or per contra sense. In this sense it is found joined with *δε*, the common adversative conjunction "but;" and signifies "under existing circumstances," *νῦν δε*, "but as things *actually* are," in opposition to what had been stated in the hypothesis. It announces the *actual* existence of something directly opposite to what had been before, for the sake of argument, *supposed* to exist. Thus HERODOTUS iii, 25, says, *εἰ μὲν νῦν μαθὼν ταῦτα ὁ Καμβύσης ἐγνωσιμάχου, καὶ ἀπῆγε ὀπίσω τὸν στρατὸν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχῇθεν γενομένη ἁμαρτάδι, ἢν ἂν σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, νῦν δὲ οὐδένα λόγον ποιεύμενος ἦτε αἰεὶ ἐς τὸ πρόσω*. "If

future kingdom of Christ is, not the commencement of his kingdom, but its millennial enlargement as preparatory to the period of

now (the *νυν* employed here is the *νυν* of transition, or inference, which we class under the *argumentative*) Cambyses, knowing all this, had changed his mind and led his army back upon his first failure, he would have been a wise man; *but, as he was not a wise man*, he inconsiderately continued to advance." The words which we have translated, "*but as he was not a wise man*" are *νυν δὲ* "but as things were." In HERODOTUS iii. 21, the Ethiopian king says to the Persian ambassadors. "The king of the Persians is not a just man," and proceeds, *εἰ γὰρ ἦν δίκαιος, οὐτ' ἂν ἐπεθύμησε χώρας ἄλλης ἢ τῆς ἰωντοῦ, οὐτ' ἂν ἐς δουλοσύνην ἀνθρώπους ἤγε ἕπ' ὧν μηδὲν ἠίδεσθαι, νυν δὲ αὐτῷ τόξον τόδε διδόντες τάδε ἔπεα λέγετε.* "For if he had been a just man, he would never have aimed at the possession of any country besides his own; nor would he have endeavored to reduce to slavery a people from whom he had received no injury: *but as he has done all this, as he has aimed at the possession of another country besides his own*, &c. (*νυν δὲ*, but under existing circumstances), give him this bow and tell him what I say."

In EURIPIDES *Phœniss.* 1. 509.

Εἰ πᾶσι παντὸ καλὸν ἔφν, σοφόν θ' ἄμα

Οὐκ ἦν ἂν ἀμφίλεκτος ἀνθρώποις ἔρις.

Νυν δ' οὐθ' ὁμοιον δοῦδεν, οὐτ' ἴσον βροτοῖς.

"If nature had endowed all with the same virtue, and wisdom too, there would have been no disputatious contention among men; *but as nature has not equally endowed all with virtue and wisdom* (*νυν δὲ*, 'but as it is') there is nothing similar or equal in mortals." Comp. ARISTOPH. in *Vesp.* 710. First something is supposed for argument's sake to have existed, which, if it had existed, would have been inevitably followed by a certain result. Then, by showing that there was no such result, it is concluded that what was *supposed* to have existed, *could not* have existed. Thus in the passage under consideration, when Pilate said, "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?" Jesus an-

his descent to the final judgment. The Son of man is exhibited to our view as coming "with the clouds of heaven," v. 13. It has been demanded whether these terms are not similar to those which are employed to describe his final advent in the Acts of the Apostles; if so, are we not justified in concluding that he may speedily come in glory and in person to *introduce* the period of his final reign on earth? "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go up into heaven."—Acts i. 9—11.

swered, "My kingdom is not *of this world*;" i. e. is not temporal. He then *proves* it, by an argument far more intelligible to a Roman governor than any he could have drawn from the Hebrew scriptures, saying, "If my kingdom had been of this world, my adherents would, by fighting, have prevented my being delivered into the hands of the Jews; *but as they did not fight* (*v̄v̄ ðè*) my kingdom is not of this world." How?—Because if it had been of this world, they would have fought; which was not the case. To have declared himself *temporal* king of the Jews, would have been judged an act of treason against the Roman emperor. The object of our Lord then is to show Pilate that he is no *temporal** king, and therefore is no traitor to

* Compare with this the account in John xix. v. 15.

It does not appear necessary, however, to give the decorative circumstances which are imputed to the manifestations of the Son of God, a literal interpretation; but, on the contrary, such an interpretation rather degrades than elevates the subject. It scarcely comports with the sobriety of sound criticism to interpret the expression he shall “so come, *in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven,” as signifying literally he shall come

the Roman emperor; and this he proves, as we have said, in the manner most intelligible to Pilate. This then is the drift of the argument contained in the 36th verse: “All kings of *this world* are protected by their subjects fighting for them; but *I* evidently am not protected by *my* subjects fighting for *me*; (else, I should not have been brought by the Jews to trial, my adherents would have fought in my defence) therefore, my kingdom is not, cannot be *temporal*.” One or two scriptural examples place the correct interpretation of this passage beyond all reasonable doubt: 1 Cor. vii. 14. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; *but under existing circumstances* (*ὑὸν δὲ*, in fact, as it really is) they are holy.” John xv. 22. “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they would have had no sin; *but as I have come and spoken unto them* (*ὑὸν δὲ*, but under existing circumstances) they can have nothing to say in excuse for their sin.”

The Latin word *nunc*, now, is used in the same sense by Roman writers; CICERO in *Tusc. Quæst.* iii. 2, says, “Sunt enim ingeniis nostris semina innata virtutum; quæ si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natu a perduceret. *Nunc autem* (precisely corresponding to *ὑὸν δὲ*), simul atque editi in lucem——in omni continuo pravitate versamur.” And in the same way he employs the more explicit phrase *ut nunc est*, *X. Fam. Ep. 31. ad fin.* “Constitui, *ut nunc est* (under existing circumstances) cum exercitu proficisci.” *Comp. Epist. ad Attic.* xii. 29.

in a cloud ; but rather it must mean, *in an obvious and glorious manner*.* Either this must be allowed to be figurative, or similar descriptions of the Deity must be admitted to be literal, and we must build up a theory upon the ruins of all the usages of language. Will any interpreter, for example, affirm this to be literal—"I will *go*, and *return to my place*, till they acknowledge their offence?" Hos. v. 15 ; or the following:—"The Lord *cometh out of his place* to punish the inhabitants of the earth?" Is. xxvi. 21 ; or the prophecy which attributes the use of fire, in anger, and a sword to the Lord?—"For, behold, the Lord will come *with fire* and with *his chariots*, like a whirlwind, to render his anger *with fury*, and his rebuke *with flames of fire*. For by *fire* and

* The term translated *in like manner* is *ὡς τρόπον*, and is precisely the same as is employed in Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as (*ὡς τρόπον*) a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." The reference is to the *character* of the appearance. "Riding upon the clouds," signifies success against our enemies and enlargement of power.—*More*.

"In the ancient prophets, God is frequently described as coming in the clouds, upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power."—*Newton*.

"Christ is said to come in the clouds of heaven, in the style of scripture, as often as he demonstrates his glory and majesty by the signal effects of his favor.—*Vitringa*.

"Any signal interposition in behalf of his church, or in the destruction of his enemies, may be metaphorically called a coming, or a *parousia* of Christ."—*Newcombe*.

by *his sword* will the Lord plead with all flesh." Is. lxvi. 15, 16.

But apart from all this, be it remarked, that in Daniel, the Son of man is represented as coming to *receive* a kingdom, not to exercise judgment; and the conferring of this kingdom is ascribed to the Ancient of days. But Christ is also described in the New Testament as the Judge of the world. If, therefore, he is to come in the clouds and in glory at the *commencement* of the millenium, to *receive* a kingdom, he will also come *again* on the day of *judgment*, to decide the destinies of mankind. This would involve the necessity of maintaining *three* separate appearances, namely, at his incarnation, at the beginning of the millenium, and at its conclusion; a doctrine, we apprehend, few would advocate.

It is worthy of notice, that of the Son of man it is said he "came *to the Ancient of days*, and they brought him near him." This is quite different from coming *to the world*, or to the earth, to assume temporal glory and dominion. In short, it is a *vision*; this must ever be borne in mind; a vision, not a history; a figurative and symbolical representation of the future; the splendid decoration of a scene which is only to be viewed, like hieroglyphic paintings, in its substantial events. Thus in the poetical and figurative book of Job, Satan is represented as coming among the sons of

God, and a conversation is held between the Lord and this fallen spirit. Is this literal? Besides, in the vision of the seventh chapter, with which we are comparing that of the second, if it be insisted that the coming of Christ is literal, then the coming of the Ancient of days is literal; and it is the Father, and not the Son, who will introduce the millenium by a visible and personal manifestation. But it is a law in interpreting scripture, from which we may never depart, not to strain metaphors or similes too far; and to take care that we do not lose the spirit of the subject, in an undue attention to the minuteness of its details, or the brilliancy of its colorings.

A brief remark or two, of a general kind, may not inappropriately conclude this subject.

1. We should be careful to avoid giving a *disproportionate attention* to one part of inspired truth, so as to neglect or disparage the rest. This is undoubtedly a source of error; and to this we are in various ways strongly tempted. Our solicitude to defend what is attacked, or to elucidate what to many seems obscure, or to indulge the pleasure of contemplating what is magnificent, may have an ensnaring effect upon the mind. Most men are more easily captivated by what is imaginative or beautiful, than by what demands patient investiga-

tion and profound thought ; or than by what more directly involves considerations of immediate duty. Hence multitudes, who disregard the most solemn appeals of religion, are willingly led at once into the regions of theory and speculation. That prophecy is a very important study, and has been too much overlooked, is readily admitted ; but it is to be feared, that it has of late engrossed too exclusive an attention, and, as in other times, a mistaken zeal, or the pride of the singularity, has drawn many astray.

2. Nothing, besides, is more essential to the peace of the christian world, the comfort of our own minds, and the proof of our personal piety, than avoiding *the language and the spirit of censoriousness*. That it is one of the prevalent vices of the present day, which has been generated and inflamed by religious controversy, and particularly by the discussion of what is termed the *millenarian question*, cannot be doubted. It appears to have originated, as it is natural that it should, in that disproportioned regard to the prophetic portion of scripture to which we have adverted. We first regret, then remonstrate, then censure, and often, alas, then despise those who cannot be induced to attribute the same degree of importance to a subject which we ourselves deem of overwhelming magnitude, and which we have, in our ardor, erected into

a standard of orthodoxy, and a test of religion. When this subject too is of a brilliant and imaginative character, the senses are dazzled, the judgment overruled, and the mind impatient of doubt or contradiction. Hence some soar even into wild enthusiasm, and dictate to their companions the language of reproach against those who lag behind them, in the less glowing regions of sober and sedulous inquiry. Even truth itself is held in unrighteousness, when it is associated with slander; and when the tongue is calumnious, we can hardly believe it to be "set on fire" of *heaven*!

3. It may be worthy of consideration whether those who advocate the setting up of Christ's kingdom as still future, do not deduct considerably from the *motive to exertion* which arises out of the opposite sentiment. At first sight, indeed, it would appear that the expectation of the speedy and glorious manifestation of the Son of God to commence his reign, must both awaken emotions of delight, and prompt to the conduct which he requires. But, inasmuch as this coming of Christ is no more certain than death, nor probably so near in its approach, it is difficult to realize it as a stronger motive to action, when it is recollected, that the moment of our departure seals our character and transmits us to his presence. For what end, according to the views of millenarians, is the gospel to be

preached? As a *testimony* to all nations. But in their view, the publication of it cannot, to any great extent, succeed: their argument, indeed, implies that it cannot succeed at all, because the kingdom of Christ cannot be "set up" till he comes in person for that purpose. But while success is not to be the measure of duty, it is continually referred to in scripture, as the motive of action. If, however, we are required to labor, simply because such is the will of Christ, however powerful such a motive is and ought to be, it is not the motive generally urged in scripture as dissociated from other considerations; and it proceeds, in this case, upon the supposition that all our efforts must be unavailable to the establishment of his kingdom, since he will himself personally come to erect it. But surely no consideration can equal in force and magnitude that which is so fully stated in the sacred volume, that in the promotion of his cause, and the acceleration of his final dominion, though the power and the glory be his own, to us belongs the high distinction of successful instrumentality.

LECTURE IV.

DANIEL II. 46—9, AND III. 1—8.

Although we have given an explanation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, conformable as we believe to its true intent, so far as it may be ascertained by the light of collateral revelations and the development of subsequent events, it is not to be imagined that the Babylonish monarch was able to penetrate all its mysteries. He was, doubtless, powerfully affected with the evident authority with which Daniel spoke, the precision of his communications, and the general idea of changes awaiting his own or other empires of the world. The effect indeed produced upon his mind at the moment, is thus represented :

Verse 46.—Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him.

47.—The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.

- 48.—Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.
- 49.—Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Like most men of violent passions, Nebuchadnezzar was driven, by Daniel's remarkable statement, from the extreme of rage to that of adulation. The question has been much agitated among learned critics, whether the king paid divine honors to the prophet on this occasion, or whether he only heaped upon him a profusion of eastern compliments. Harmer has investigated this subject at great length, to show that the words which countenance the idea of a sacrifice, mean only such tokens of respect as the oriental nations occasionally use. Calvin considers that it was a real adoration, and supposes that Daniel, having contracted something of the pride that belongs to the servants of a court, willingly received it. But is it to be imagined that a man so distinguished by the love of God, and by his frequent rejection of personal honor, should have been betrayed on this occasion into such egregious folly and wickedness? If we suppose that under the first excitement of these astonishing revelations, the monarch, exceeding the boundaries of reason, forgot his

own dignity in an attempt to deify the prophet,—in the absence of all evidence, it would be severe indeed, to impute to so eminent a servant of God, a disposition so hateful and so opposed to all his avowed principles. The expression “the king *answered* unto Daniel,” seems to imply there had been some unrecorded conversation between them; and may not the most probable explanation be, that the king was betrayed by a momentary impulse to offer what Daniel resolutely though respectfully disclaimed? Christians are sometimes endangered by the honor which may be occasionally received from men; but O how solicitous should they be of acquiring that which comes from God! Genuine religion is, in every situation of life, the only safeguard of virtue. We should constantly pray, “lead us not into temptation.”

After the acknowledgment made by Nebuchadnezzar in the 47th verse, it appears natural to anticipate that he would henceforth have rejected Bel, with the gods of the nations, and have devoted himself to the exclusive worship of the God of Israel. But when the heart is unconverted to the love of the truth, men will only render the homage of the lips. And O how unavailable is mere external adoration! The concentrated force of all divine requisitions seems to be put into that authoritative yet affectionate appeal,—“My son give me thine *heart*.”

In his highest elevation, Daniel did not forget his friends; but at his request they were raised to the superintendence of the affairs of Babylon under his orders. His request to the king was probably dictated, not only by the feelings of private friendship, but by a solicitude for the interests of the church and nation of the Jews, in which he knew that he should be assisted by his associates. "It is thus that God, from time to time, and for reasons worthy of his sovereign wisdom, deems it proper, even in this life, conspicuously to distinguish some of his servants by worldly glory, while he leaves others in obscurity or in affliction; showing, in the former instances, that piety does not shut up the road to riches and offices, and by the latter, that the possessions of the present world are not real, and that this is not the place of rewards. The piety and zeal of Daniel, and of his three worthy friends, assure us that these holy men rendered to God the universal homage of their lives and fortunes; and that, in the midst of an idolatrous court, they carefully preserved the integrity of their faith and the purity of their morals."*

* SAURIN, *Disc. Historiques, Critiques, &c.* continuez par. M. ROQUES. Tom. vii. p. 493.

CHAPTER III.

A considerable interval of time elapsed between the transactions related in the preceding, and those which form the subject of the present chapter. As, however, the events which occurred during this period had no immediate connexion with Jewish affairs, they are omitted. It is not unusual, on a similar account, for some of the narratives of scripture to contain abrupt and perplexing transitions. The Septuagint and Arabic versions refer the following events to the 18th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, after he had obtained many splendid victories. But, as the precise chronology is not indicated in the text, it is immaterial.

Verse 1.—Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2.—Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

3.—Then the princes, the governors and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4.—Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

- 5.—That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up;
- 6.—And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
- 7.—Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Various conjectures have been formed respecting the motives which might have led to this extraordinary proceeding. Some have supposed that it was Nebuchadnezzar's intention to falsify the prediction of Daniel with regard to the demolition of his empire; others that he meant to obviate the jealousies that existed among his people, on account of the eulogistic language he had employed in favor of the God of Israel, and the high distinctions he had conferred on the Jewish captives; others, that the design was to give an ostentatious display of his opulence, and even to render himself an object of public honor and adoration. If this last mentioned purpose had been the real one, it would not have stood alone in history as the single instance of this folly and impiety. Caligula built a temple, where he erected a statue of gold, which was every day clothed in a robe like that of the emperor, and peculiar priests and sacrifices were appropriated to him. Domitian de-

manded the appellations of *Lord* and *God*, whether addressed orally or in writing. Both Alexander and Darius the Mede received divine honors. There is nothing, however, in this narrative to justify such a conclusion, with regard to Nebuchadnezzar; on the contrary, when the accusation was preferred against certain individuals who declined bowing the knee before the image, the charge was that they had refused "to serve his *gods*." The most natural interpretation, therefore, is, that the erection of this image was an act of gross idolatry; proving the besotted state of the human mind in general, when imbued with false religion, and the criminal forgetfulness of this royal devotee in particular, of the divine monitions he had received, and of his own magnificent pretensions of reverence for the God of Israel. He had before (ch. i. ii.) presented the spoils of the temple of Jerusalem to the tutelary god of the Babylonians; it is therefore probable that he dedicated this image to the same divinity, to whom he required his people to pay homage.

The surprising dimensions of this statue have induced some to imagine that the elevation included a pedestal or pillar upon which it might be presumed to have stood. Threescore cubits would amount to about thirty yards, or ninety feet; or at the utmost to 105 feet, if the statement of Herodotus be

admitted, that the king's cubit in Babylon was three fingers larger than the usual one. But the Colossus at Rhodes, dedicated to the sun, was seventy cubits high, and of such a magnitude that its fingers were larger than ordinary statues; and the Colossus at Tarentum, in Calabria, dedicated it to Jupiter, measured sixty cubits.

The dedication was in conformity with the character of those idolatrous times; and the decree which appointed it evinced the spirit of a malignant superstition. The deep degeneracy of our nature, the littleness of human pride, and the intolerance of political and religious despotism are here displayed. Nothing was omitted that could impart celebrity to the transaction, and enstamp it with grandeur. Not content with summoning together his court and the inhabitants of the district of Babylon, the king sent letters to all the provinces, requiring the attendance of all the officers of rank on this magnificent mockery, that he might gratify his sight and sate his ambition, by a kind of convention of all the nations over which his dominion extended. A herald was to notify the precise time when the prostrations of this brilliant assemblage were to be made before the idol-statute; and to render it the more intelligible to people of different languages, the announcement was to be given with the fascinating accompani-

ment of the "cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music." Nor was this sufficient to satisfy this ardent idolater; for whoever ventured to disobey the royal mandate, was to be instantly committed to a fiery furnace. No doubt Nebuchadnezzar identified his own authority with the claims of his imaginary deities, and thus made it obvious, to himself at least, that impiety to them and disobedience to him were similar or equal crimes.

It would be difficult to describe or even to conceive the excitement which prevailed throughout the empire of Babylon, and more especially in the plain of Dura, at the dedication of this image; for, though the principal magistrates and nobles were specially summoned, their presence would naturally attract an innumerable multitude of all classes of the people. While the idol was erecting its progress from day to day would be the subject of private conversation, and of public announcement. The spot would be visited and revisited by anxious thousands; who would praise their gods, admire the workmanship, and detail through all the myriad channels of possible communication its gradual progress from cubit to cubit and inch to inch to its final dimensions. It would be pronounced of unrivalled grandeur, the perfection of human art, the glory of the monarch's reign under whose

auspices it was reared. It would be viewed as a monument capable of fixing a character upon the age, promoting the interests of idolatry beyond all former precedent, and furnishing a splendid tale for unborn generations. Nothing was wanting to impart dignity to the occasion, and peculiar pains were taken to secure that uniformity in worship, which was enforced by the king's sanguinary decree. What a pitiable exhibition both of the weakness and wickedness of man was now to be seen in the plain of Dura! What a desecration of the noblest faculties of intellectual and moral beings to the basest purposes! What an atrocious and systematic attempt on the part of a great ruler, to exclude "the blessed and only potentate" from his own world! What a mean and creeping sycophancy on the part of mighty nations to his will, and to the cherished superstitions of a dark age! How exalted were crime and folly! How sunk and dishonored was human nature!

1. The narrative under consideration is calculated to suggest *the importance of justly appreciating the character of God, as an infinite and spiritual intelligence*. A right idea of his nature and perfections is the element of all true wisdom, and the only source of moral consistency. Our *primary* thought of God must affect *all* our thoughts. Error at the outset must issue in continual and multiform

varieties of subsequent error, as the streams which diffuse themselves in different directions arise from the same fountain. Ignorance of God, however, is not to be regarded as a mere mental error; it is in fact essentially moral, for the eccentricities of the human mind in religion, have originated in men "not liking to retain God in their knowledge." Their creed has been dictated by their heart, and their judgment has become polluted, till being misled not only by the caprices of a disordered understanding, but by the base and cherished passions of a degenerate soul, they have filled this once happy mansion of un-fallen man, with polytheistic inventions and atrocities.

2. Devout gratitude ought to be inspired in our bosoms when we reflect that, *instead of being bewildered and destroyed by heathenism, we possess the religion of Jesus*; which attests its divinity in the truth and simplicity of its principles, the uncompromising virtue of its precepts, the purity of its tendencies, the greatness of its discoveries, the plenitude of its grace, its revelations of the character of God, and of the responsibility and immortality of man, and especially of the only ground of salvation for a ruined world. Wherever the moral perfections of deity and the way of acceptance with him are unknown, the consequence is visible in the state of mankind. A relaxed virtue will follow upon an erroneous conception of the

supreme intelligence and of our relations to him; and wherever his being is virtually denied, as in nations addicted to idolatry, the very name of religion itself will be prostituted to the basest passions. The views which the mind entertains of truth, and especially of the great first cause will necessarily modify the character, because it will empoison or purify the motives of action. The belief we entertain will either assimilate us to God by its power and purity, or transform the object of worship into the likeness of men, by its weakness and corruption. In the former, we perceive the influence of Christianity; in the latter, the operation of idolatry and polytheism. How excellent does the gospel of Christ appear in contrast with the abominations of the heathen world! It reveals God as a spirit, and requires that "they who worship him should worship him in spirit and in truth." It depicts the state of man as an offender against his Maker, degenerate in his nature, sinful in his conduct, and exposed to an awful but merited doom. To a certain degree there exists in almost every nation a kind of innate consciousness of this fact,—a bewildering sense of a condition which is fearful yet undefinable; from which the various forms of false religion appear as so many distinct but vain efforts at deliverance. But the apprehensions which this consciousness occasions,

with regard both to present and to future woe, are removed by the proclamation of pardon, reconciliation, and eternal life, through the atonement of Jesus Christ. In that great dispensation of mercy it is made apparent, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish," and it becomes "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

But what a paradox of folly and impiety does it appear, that the decree of a heathen prince to serve his false gods should be promptly obeyed, and the command of the only living and true God to believe in his Son, should be perseveringly neglected—that an idol should be adored and a Saviour denied—that there should be unanimity in false worship, and division in the true! We invite you, not to a senseless statue, but to a gracious father; not to a thing of nought which has neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hands to help, but to one who "pitied us in our low estate," gave his life an offering for sin, and has caused the declaration to be written in legible and eternal characters, "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

3. This flagrant exhibition of an impious worship in the plain of Dura, may serve to turn our thoughts to a species of *idolatry, which, if more refined, is equally dangerous and*

incomparably greater in extent. It is not confined to heathen lands, but abounds in the civilized world, and presents its hideous aspect even amidst the outward forms of religion in Christendom. It is, in fact, an idolatry that finds its abettors in the passions of every human heart, and has its temple and its sacrifices, more or less consecrated, in every bosom. The plain of Dura could not have contained the millions that worship the great idol, **SELF**, which demands and receives so many willing prostrations, so many hard services, such incessant and fervent devotion. Against this destructive idolatry, to which the world is grossly addicted, and which precludes, while persisted in, the salvation of the soul, the precepts of the gospel are levelled, as its principles are in utter and avowed hostility to it. "If any man will come after me," said the great teacher, "let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."—"Who-soever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Splendid ceremonies, which attach to those who observe them a certain degree of distinction and glory, may be easily performed; but the internal offering, "the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite spirit," love to God and separation from the world, can only belong to true religion, as they spring from the energy of divine grace, and are the proofs of that moral vic-

tory over human nature, which Christianity alone can achieve. No pomp, or sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, and psaltery, are here required. The spirit of genuine religion is free from that which is ostentatious and merely adapted to allure the senses; it neither prevails by parade, nor by compulsion; it disclaims what is artificial and noisy; its music is the voice of prayer; its herald the exhibition of a "conduct becoming the gospel;" its triumph the sanctification of the heart.

LECTURE VII.

DANIEL III.

Verse 8.—Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews.

9.—They spake, and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

10.—Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image :

11.—And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12.—There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego ; these men, O king, have not regarded thee : they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

This accusation was dictated by *ingratitude*. When the Chaldean sages had failed to recall and interpret the dream of the king, Daniel had interceded for their lives ; (chap. ii. 24.) now they requite his kindness by scheming the destruction of his friends !

It was the result also of *zeal for idolatry*, combined with *hostility against the Jewish religion*. This infatuation demands our pity, while it compels our censure. It must be obvious that the Babylonians were incapable of appreciating the simple grandeur of that truth, which, by a peculiar dispensation of mercy, had been imparted to the people of Israel. False religion has always been allied to cruelty and oppression; while that of the Bible inspires a philanthropy which aims to alleviate the sufferings of humanity, and a benevolence that seeks the eternal welfare of man.

The address of the accusers was evidently instigated by *envy and ambition*: hateful tempers, the growth of principles that have their root in hell! These men could not contemplate the elevation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, without the impatience and vexation incident to ambitious minds. That persons who were strangers, of another religion, and captives, should be raised to distinction, was not to be endured; to compass their destruction was therefore a favorite object of pursuit. With what a glow of satisfaction did they observe their disobedience to the king's decree! They were delighted to see them entrapped; and in marked and crafty terms reported their treason and impiety—"these men have not regarded **THEE**." They first accuse them of rebellion against the king, and

then of disregard to the gods. Alas! how base as well as dangerous is flattery; and how little to be envied is the condition of those whose eminence of station exposes them to its snares! And yet worldly men unwittingly reproach the people of God with that which is in reality their glory. These Chaldeans were exalting the captive Jews whom they meant to depreciate. They were investing them with a wreath of unfading distinction, and virtually seeking to embalm themselves in imperishable disgrace. Their reproach was honor; their insult, renown!

Verse 13.—Then Nebuchadnezzar, in *his* rage and fury, commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Then they brought these men before the king.

14.—Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said unto them, *Is it true*, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

15.—Now, if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace: and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

As no reason is given why Daniel was not of the number of the accused party, none can with certainty be assigned: the probability is, either that he was absent on some state affair in a distant province, or that his pre-

eminence, "sitting in the gate of the king," intimidated his adversaries, who would be likely to vacillate between sycophancy and malignity.

The effect which the accusers anticipated was produced. They had referred with seeming anxiety to the king's prerogative and authority as well as to the claims of their religion; Nebuchadnezzar became exasperated, and offered them the final alternative, to *conform* or *burn*. When we recollect his former expressions of reverence for the God of Daniel, it seems extraordinary that he should have added this boasting appeal, "and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" But it is only a new illustration of the stupifying power of sin, and of the evanescent nature of those impressions which go no deeper than mere conviction. Nor is it unusual that where there is a rooted and persisting prejudice, the stronger the evidence of truth, the more inveterate is the hostility against it, and the more superciliously and enthusiastically does the mind retain its errors.

Verse 16.—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17.—If it be *so*, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18.—But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

In estimating conduct, it is necessary to take into consideration the standard of truth, the motives which prompt to certain actions, and the circumstances of the individual. There can be but one infallible standard. This, however, was very imperfectly revealed to the heathen world, who were only indulged with the light of nature; but it was given to the Jews in a dispensation which was precursory to the fuller revelations of the Christian economy. In the sight of God, actions are estimated in their *entireness*, as consisting partly of the external exhibitions of character, and in part and principally of the internal sentiment. An action apparently good, may be essentially wrong, from the polluting influence of a secret iniquity of purpose, or from the love of human applause, vanity, hypocrisy, or other selfish principle. Circumstances also have an obvious effect upon the character of an action. That which is right, holy, and wise, may partake of nothing extraordinary, if there be a co-operation of favorable influences and concurring events; whereas the same action or series of actions persevered in amidst obstacles, obloquies, and inward conflicts, may awaken in the spectator feelings of exalted respect, admiration, and love. Virtue struggling with difficulties, acquired celebrity in the heathen world, and when that virtue is the modification or expression of

pure religion, it is the highest attainment of our nature.

These remarks have been elicited by this account of the noble heroism of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Their conference was characterized by that firmness and decision which the cause required. As Israelites they possessed the true religion; they knew the standard to which they were pledged, and felt the extent of their obligations. Their motives were pure, as their faith was genuine and vigorous. By compromise they might have gained the world; by perseverance they lost it. They were encompassed by every influence which was adapted to urge compliance; but they yielded not, they hesitated not for a moment. They chose pain instead of pleasure, contumely instead of honor, life instead of death. There were strong *temptations* to allure them astray—the example of the multitude, the favor of the king, who had raised them to distinction, their present lucrative and high employments, the facility of an external obedience, which might seem to ensure not only their escape, but future usefulness: there were *imminent dangers* to alarm them from the path of duty—the charge of treason against their sovereign, and of rebellion against the laws, the reproaches of millions who identified idolatry with religion, the instant and terrible punishment of being cast

into a burning furnace. But faith was equal to the occasion; she triumphed over earthly attractions and human fears, showing the strength of her wings and the intensity of her vision as difficulties accumulated and the scene grew darker around her. These holy martyrs obeyed God rather than man. They calculated that the loss of their rank and occupations was nothing to the loss of their character as the children of God and heirs of heaven. The fiery ordeal was exquisitely painful, but not to be compared with the "worm that never dieth, nor the fire that is not quenched." Hell was more to be feared than the furnace, heaven to be more desired than the court of Babylon, and the love of God more to be cherished than the applauses of men. Severe indeed has been the test, but they endured it unflinchingly, and have gained an immortal crown. To sacrifice life in a bad cause is infatuation and crime; to yield it readily in a good one is true glory. Happy, thrice happy, the servants of God of the ancient church, and the disciples of Christ of the Christian age, who shall be privileged to meet in the blissful hereafter, to celebrate together the victories which divine grace enabled them to achieve over sinful affections, earthly adhesions, and a warring nature!

Verse 19.—Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Me-

shach, and Abed-nego; *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

- 20.—And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace.
- 21.—Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.
- 22.—Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.
- 23.—And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.
- 24.—Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.
- 25.—He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.
- 26.—Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire.
- 27.—And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.
- 28.—*Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath

sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and hath changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God.

29.—Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort.

30.—Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

The following are a few of the instructive sentiments with which this portion of the history is fraught:—

1. *Early devotedness to God is the best preparation for future events, and a most encouraging pledge of future excellence.* The traits of character in these Hebrew captives, at the commencement of the book of Daniel, prepared us to expect a maturity of faith and a fortitude of mind like what is here displayed. At that time they refused to defile themselves with the king's meat, and thus disciplined themselves to denounce his idolatrous worship. The blossoms of the spring do not indeed always ripen into the fruits of autumn, but generally it will be manifest, that the accompaniments of exalted enjoyment and eminent excellence in religion, will ensue from its early implantation in the heart.

2. *The element of true piety is the spirit of*

martyrdom ; and we may be assured that divine grace, which capacitates for the first act of self-denial, is sufficient, in its more copious communications, for every possible exigency. A spiritually-minded man must be in a state of conflict with external circumstances ; it is the inevitable consequence and the condition of his profession. Though some periods and places may be more exempt from the severer trials which attach to others, the spirit of christianity and of the world must, in different forms, be in continual hostility. Looking at themselves, and calculating upon their present degree of moral strength, the people of God have often dreaded the difficulties in which they might be involved, and doubted the result ; but in actual danger or suffering, and while a grace proportioned to the day, upon which they are always encouraged to depend, has been imparted, the very feeblest in mind, and the most tender in constitution, have outbraved the machinations of Satan, and the fiercest persecutions of men. He who *takes up* the cross with holy boldness, will be enabled by prayer and faith to *bear it*.

3. *As God is able to afford adequate support to his people in every affliction, and will not withhold his presence, so for the purposes of his own glory, he has often wonderfully interposed for their deliverance.* In connexion with this sentiment, it is important to realize another,

which is in fact a branch of it, that as his sovereignty will be exercised, and his wisdom ought to determine, it becomes us to refer the time and mode of infliction or rescue implicitly, entirely, and devoutly to him. The interpositions of Providence are sometimes the most remarkable when they are the least anticipated. These devoted saints entertained, perhaps, some hope of deliverance; they knew it was possible, and they might think, from past manifestations, and the present good effects likely to follow in favor of the true religion, it might be deemed probable; but "if not," they were prepared for the worst. The Christian may not always be privileged like them, to walk *untouched* in the flames; but he will never walk in affliction, while faith is firm, *unconsoled, unvisited, unsanctified!*

Was the form of the fourth indeed the Son of God, or was it some ministering spirit sent to these "hours of salvation?" We attempt not to decide, but may observe, that the Redeemer, before his incarnation, was unquestionably interested in the progress of the true church, did in a marked manner evidently superintend its interests, in constant anticipation of the long predicted advent and atonement on the cross, and will never fail to bless, as their need and his own glory requires, his church collectively, or his saints individually, in their respective necessities.

4. *The enemies of truth and of piety expose themselves to the present visitations of an avenging Providence, and the future miseries of unquenchable flames ; a thought which demands our pity, our prayers, and our exertions on their behalf.* How affecting, how awful, was the fate of those who were employed to cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the fiery furnace ! “ They were utterly consumed, in a moment.” It was a signal exemplification of the fact, that “ the wages of sin is death.” Temporal sufferings are commonly the result of immoral actions ; but “ everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,” and the “ lake that burneth with brimstone and fire, which is the second death,” await also the servants of iniquity. “ Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men !”

5. Let us recur, again and again, to the sentiment, deduced from the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar after the miraculous escape of these persecuted servants of the most High,—that *conviction, however strong, if momentary, and an external change of conduct, however favorable to the interests of religion, if it be only impulsive, is not to be confounded with true piety.* Conviction may induce men “ to do many things,” when the heart remains unregenerate ; but real religion is a holy and steady principle, burning in its purity like a vestal

fire, kindled in the heart by coals from the altar of heaven, and alike inextinguishable by human power and infernal agency. Conviction is indeed the incipient form of religion—its germ and bud; but to attest its reality and stamp its character, it must blossom into decision and ripen into perseverance.

LECTURE VIII.

DANIEL IV.

This very remarkable document was written by Nebuchadnezzar himself, but by divine direction has been incorporated with the volume of prophecy. As an exposition of that monarch's state of mind in the latter part of his life, it must be regarded not only as one of the most ancient, but as one of the most interesting pieces of autobiography.

Verse 1.—Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you.

2.—I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

3.—How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

The address “unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth,” refers, of course to those of his own empire, in the

usual style of oriental exaggeration, accompanied with the common salutation, "Peace be multiplied unto you."

The reference to the most High God is solemn and impressive; the language is sublimely simple, and contains the confessions which repeated experience alone could have extorted. It is pleasing to see this mighty ruler impressed with the majesty of the Supreme; and with an implied consciousness both of his own insignificance and of the limitation in space and time of his and all other empires, celebrating, in exalted strains, the eternity of God's dominion.

- 4.—I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace.
- 5.—I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.
- 6.—Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.
- 7.—Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

It is one of the mysteries of providence, that peace and prosperity are often afforded to the wicked, while the righteous are involved in every species of adversity. His own account presents Nebuchadnezzar to our view in a state of the greatest worldly felicity, possessing at once domestic peace and public

glory ; feeling life to be at its highest tide of temporal enjoyment. We should be thankful for prosperity, but have no reason to confide in it. In this instance, however, the dream of joy was soon interrupted by a vision that excited foreboding, though perhaps indefinable apprehensions. He summoned once more the wise men of Babylon, who had before declared that, if he could have recalled his former dream, they would have given him the interpretation. But the futility of all their pretensions at length became manifest, in their obvious incapacity on this occasion.

- 8.—But at the last Daniel came in before me (whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods,) and before him I told the dream, *saying*,
- 9.—O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.
- 10.—Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed : I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great.
- 11.—The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth.
- 12.—The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all : the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.
- 13.—I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven.
- 14.—He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree,

- and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.
- 15.—Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth.
- 16.—Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.
- 17.—This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.
- 18.—This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now, thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof; forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

“The spirit of the holy gods” is a revolting phrase after the indication we have had of the king's knowledge of Jehovah; but some critics consider that the words are capable of a singular sense, which several versions assign to them. He speaks also of Belteshazzar as a name conferred on Daniel after the name of Bel, whom he still denominates “*our* god.”

By the word *watcher* we are to understand an angel, so called, as being one of those exalted intelligences who are appointed both to guard important interests and to undertake important embassies in the administration of the divine government. “Bless the Lord, ye

his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure." Psalm ciii. 20, 21.

The description of this dream will remind the scripture reader of that remarkable illustration which is contained in the thirty-first chapter of Ezekiel, where the images of the cedar of Lebanon refer to the king of Assyria retrospectively, but by anticipation also to the king of Egypt. Lowth, in his Lectures on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, after commenting with great precision upon their poetic and prophetic figures, adds, respecting this parable of Ezekiel—"than which, if we consider the imagery itself, none was ever more apt or more beautiful; of the description and coloring, none was ever more elegant or splendid."

- 19.—Then Daniel (whose name *was* Belteshazzar) was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.
- 20.—The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth:
- 21.—Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

- 22.—It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong : for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.
- 23.—And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it ; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him.
- 24.—This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king :
- 25.—That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.
- 26.—And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree root's ; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.
- 27.—Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor : if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

In this paragraph three things are observable,—

1. *The astonishment of Daniel.* No sooner had the king related his dream, than the prophet was overwhelmed with feelings of surprise and awe, which entranced him, as it were, for an hour. This sensibility was honorable to his humanity, his loyalty, and his

religion. He not only perceived the nature of that dire calamity which he saw to be approaching, and which, while it would more immediately smite his sovereign, must involve an empire in affliction; but he had an awful realization of the hand of God in it. The eye of sense contemplates only the outward scene and machinery of events; but faith regards the invisible intelligence who touches the prime spring of all, and regulates every movement.

2. *The explicit and authoritative announcement of the interpretation of the dream.* To this he was encouraged by the king himself; but whether because he felt humbled, or because he cherished a spirit of daring defiance for the worst, is not stated, though the subsequent narrative would lead us to suppose the former. Having prefaced his painful communication with words which, though complimentary, bespoke distress of mind rather than adulation, he declared that the lofty and far spreading tree, with its redundant foliage and fruit, was an emblem of Nebuchadnezzar himself, in his present prosperity, subsequent abasement, and final restoration to his dignity and dominion. Some have given very minute explanations of the leaves and fruit, and beasts of the field, and fowls of heaven; but it must not be forgotten that the intention of these allegorical paintings is to convey general

ideas, and that by too precise an analysis and ramification of the sentiment, the imagination may be amused while the mind is uninstructed. In the 10th verse the tree is said to be "in the midst of the earth," which is "meant perhaps as a centre from which the extensive circuit of his empire was described. The sovereigns of the world are often represented by large trees in the language of other countries as well as in the prophetic language of the Hebrews. Princes are also considered as the branches, the leaves as the soldiery, the fruits as the annual produce, and the shadow as the protection which men may receive under government."—*Wintle*.

A tree is a beautiful illustration of prosperity. Thus the psalmist represents the righteous as "like a tree planted by the river of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The denunciation against this haughty monarch is awfully applicable to the decree which will virtually go forth at last against the whole plantation of wickedness, and every proud head that exalts itself against God,—“Hew the tree down and destroy it!” The axe of divine judgments is even now applied to the roots, and fall they must, with all their envied foliage, fruit, and glory, unless grace prevent by transplanting them into the garden

of the Lord, and causing them to be “rooted and grounded in faith.”

3. *The solemn appeal to the monarch*, v. 27. The spirit of his illustrious compatriots Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, breathed in the language of Daniel, who, with an intrepidity that became his character and his profession as the servant of the Most High God, volunteered his counsel to Nebuchadnezzar. One might fancy the prophet confronting this Lord of many realms, in the attitude of a fearless but respectful resolution; simple in his attire, penetrating in his look, measured and awful in the tones of his voice, calm in his deportment, and great in the majesty of truth and inspiration, while the king listens, trembles,—O that we could add, and “turns to the Lord with purpose of heart!” To this happy conclusion, however, we can scarcely arrive, when we find that the threatened judgment was not averted, which in other instances followed upon repentance, and when, after the lapse of a year, he walks upon his palace walls, as the history immediately relates, in all the pride of self-sufficient greatness. Of all obdurate things, surely the human heart is the most obdurate!

It may be seen from this narrative, that fidelity in executing the duties of the public office of a servant of God is a quality of essential importance, but involves no trifling diffi-

culties. Every day's experience verifies the fact that "the fear of man bringeth a snare," and that much devotion to sustain a lively faith is the only effectual means of escaping its entanglements.

It is further obvious that the most pointed and powerful appeals to the consciences of men will not invariably succeed; but the failure of our endeavors ought not to prevent reiterated effort and perseverance. The sovereignty of divine grace has not unfrequently been manifested in frustrating an instrumentality which, in human estimation, has seemed the most adapted to the end, and in prospering that which has been regarded as, in itself, the least distinguished, valuable, and effective. It is thus we are led to discriminate between the work of man and the operations of God.

The judgment pronounced upon Nebuchadnezzar, it seems to be intimated by Daniel, was conditional. His reformation might avert the threatened evil—"if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Similar instances occur in Scripture. Compare *Is.* xxxviii. 1—5; *Jerem.* xviii. 7—10; *Jonah* iii. 4—10.

Verse 28.—All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

29.—At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30.—The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?

Herodotus assures us that the wealth and resources of the state of Babylon, were equal to those of a third part of all Asia; and he represents the city as square, each side of which was 120 stadia, or 480 in circumference. The least calculation is 360 stadia, or 45 miles. Pliny affirms it to have been 60 miles. The walls were 50 cubits in height, and their breadth sufficient to admit, according to Diodorus, six chariots to drive along abreast. A branch of the river Euphrates ran through the centre, across which a bridge extended of a furlong in length, with a palace at each end. The proud monarch claims the honor of erecting this city; but though this was not strictly the fact, it only became one of the wonders of the world by his addition of the walls of a hundred gates, the temple of Belus, his palace, the hanging gardens, and other magnificent decorations.

But what is all this grandeur to that "city of God" of which real Christians are the destined inhabitants, and of which the prophets have given so splendid a description! What was the glory of Babylon, with the accumulated treasures of ages, to the "glory of God!" Every spot will be "holy ground;" for John "saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of

God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

The king of Babylon looked round upon the edifices and public works of his far-famed metropolis, saying, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" The day is not distant, when each disciple of the blessed Jesus, while traversing the golden streets, and the sacred walls and enclosures of his celestial abode, will exclaim, with emotions of exquisite delight, commingled with self-abasing gratitude—Is not this the "new Jerusalem," which my *Redeemer* has built by the might of *his* power, and for the glory of *his* majesty? Instead of the pride, the selfishness, and the mean passions of earth, "*there* shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life!"

Nebuchadnezzar "walked in the palace," that is, probably, in the palace gardens—with what an air of self-importance is better imagined than expressed—and spake, in the recorded language of boasting and disregard of providence and God, to his surrounding parasites. Poor, pitiable worm of the earth!—"While the word,"—Yes,—

Verse 31.—While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee:

- 32.—And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.
- 33.—The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*.

We suggest the following as materials for reflection on this subject:—

1. Sin is of a hardening nature, retaining its hold in defiance of warnings, and even of repeated punishments.

2. The most exalted of human beings is but an insignificant atom in the hand of infinite power.

3. God is never unmindful either of his threatenings or of his promises; which leaves the impenitent nothing to hope, and the believing nothing to fear.

4. The punishments which God inflicts upon the wicked, here or hereafter, have relation to their character and demerits.

5. As the possession of reason is the highest distinction of man, so the continuance of our mental sanity, which might in one moment be deranged, either in sovereignty or in judgment, ought to inspire our most devout and daily gratitude. What a visitation was *seven times*, that is, *seven years*, of such madness!

6. It is, in general, a proof of divine goodness that our curiosity is so much baffled respecting the events of time to come, and that an impenetrable veil is thrown over our own future history.

Verse 34.—And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High; and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation:

35.—And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36.—At the same time my reason returned unto me; and, for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom; and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37.—Now, I Nebuchadnezzar praise, and extol, and honor the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

How far this last return to the sentiments and expressions of religion was genuine, and whether we are to regard Nebuchadnezzar as finally converted to God, may be regarded as one of those questions which, while we are benevolently desirous of giving it the most favorable construction, must be referred to the great mass of unfathomable mysteries. The evidence we have a right to demand in

general, of a renewal of character, must be proportioned to the nature of past delinquencies ; and it often requires much holy skill to pilot our judgment between the Scylla and Charybdis of uncharitableness and laxity. We should be kind, but not compromising ; decided, but not repulsive, austere, and unjust : and, for ourselves, let us ever bear in mind the responsibility that attaches to our pre-eminent advantages.

LECTURE IX.

DANIEL V.

Nebuchadnezzar lived only about a year after his recovery from madness. He was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach, who married Nicotris, a person much extolled by historians for her virtue and sagacity. To this latter was born Belshazzar, who was a weak and effeminate prince. The history has now advanced to the fifty-first year of the captivity.

Verse 1.—Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

2.—Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein.

3.—Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple at the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them.

4.—They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

At this time Cyrus was besieging Babylon ; and, had not the king been immersed in self-indulgence instead of devoting himself to the interests of his empire, now involved in the most perilous circumstances, he would have proclaimed a *fast* instead of appointing “ a great *feast*.” Even if the supposition be correct that it was the regular return of some national anniversary, or more probably of some day devoted to idol gods, prudence, at least, might have dictated its suspension at so momentous a crisis. But the love of pleasure is inherent in our fallen nature, and operates, alas, with an intensity that presents a humbling contrast to the influence which the love of God exerts in our hearts ! Is it that there is more sincerity in the passion of the world than in the profession of the Christian ? Or is it not the truth that the nature of the principle, and its actual energy as portrayed in the lives, labors, and sufferings of a “ cloud of witnesses,” whose names are recorded in history, evince its surpassing power ? Behold a subject for profound self-examination and prayer !

The festival of Belshazzar illustrates not only the folly and infatuation of sin, but its tendency to progress and multiplication. Sin walks in a train ; and with what others, and

of what a frightful character, *one* vice may associate itself, is impossible to calculate. *Descent* on the precipitous road to ruin is easy, but *return* is difficult; and, however strong the attractive influence of iniquity, it has no repulsive force. The elements of evil readily rush into combination, and remain in close and inseparable adhesion, till a moral power, extraneous and divine, produces a division and destruction of them. Beware of the first step—the first compliance—the first union into a state of companionship with the wicked; for, as in the case of this impious monarch, feasting may lead to intoxication, intoxication to profanity, sacrilege, and daring defiance of God. The holy vessels of the temple were brought and desecrated with many a toast and song of revelry, in honor of their idol vanities, and many an impious laugh at the religion of the captive Jews! Sensuality, in all its various modifications, from the meanest to the loftiest modes of indulgence, has always been a prevalent vice in nations, whether barbarian or civilized, who have been addicted to false religion. It is the faith of the Bible alone that can emancipate, purify, and ennoble our nature. Innumerable are the occasions, even in a far better state of society than that which prevailed in the heathen world, when it is most appropriate and most important to call to mind the apostolic injunction, “Be not drunk with

wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the spirit." The revelry on this occasion, however, possessed a peculiar character of impiety, "they praised the gods of gold." There appears to have been, as Wintle remarks, a kind of competition, or the appearance of a triumph of the false gods over the true one, whom Nebuchadnezzar had still honored, and for whom he required respect to be shown. This appears more strongly in the Alexandrine and Coptic versions, which add, "but the everlasting God they praised not."

- 5.—In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote,
6. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

"In the same hour"—that hour of complicated crime, and of unsuspecting hilarity—that hour when danger and duty were alike forgotten—that hour to which the prophets had repeatedly referred in perspicuous and pointed descriptions—that hour which was the crisis of Chaldea's destiny and of Israel's near deliverance:—in that hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote upon the plaster of the wall, which filled the king with astonishment and terror. But wherefore this alarm? The words were unintelligible, being

probably written, as Lowth observes, in the old Hebrew letters, now called the Samaritan, of which the Chaldeans were ignorant; and there seemed ample room for imagining some optical or other delusion. If it were at once deemed supernatural, why should even an appearance of this nature have occasioned serious apprehension? Why might it not have proved a happy omen, a mysterious intimation of good, and not of evil? What was there in a shadow or an unknown character traced upon the wall to terrify a man at the summit of human glory, and congratulated by a thousand feasted and flattering courtiers? Ah, there is no defence against the power of conscience; no thunders that can drown its voice; no wealth that can purchase its verdict; no elevation that can escape its visitations. It is not necessary to employ the tempest, or the lightning, or the flaming angel to excite the fears of a sinner,—a word, a whisper, a look, a shadowy inscription on the wall will suffice! “The wicked flee when no man pursueth;” and, O how vain is all human succor when conscience sets a man’s own mind against the self-convicted transgressor! Of all the thousand lords none appear to have regarded the apparition; it was Belshazzar himself who trembled at the sight. Of all the multitudes that visit a city, or a town, that cross a plain or a mountain, that pass by a

wood, or a tree, or a cottage, there shall be but one who is affected by any extraordinary emotions ; and why ? That one associates the city, the town, the plain, the mountain, the wood, the tree, or the cottage, with the thrilling recollection of a crime committed there, which other intervening events, or years, cannot prevent, or banish from the recesses of memory and conscience. The visitations of providence, however, are sometimes prompt as well as awful ; and, notwithstanding the ease, self-confidence, and tranquil anticipations of the wicked, they may be overwhelmed with a confusion, sudden as the whirlwind, appalling as the thunderbolt. "The triumphing of the wicked is short ;" and " God is no respecter of persons."

- 7.—The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. *And* the king spake, and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.
- 8.—Then came in all the king's wise *men* ; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.
- 9.—Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Alas, how miserable are the resources to which the guilty mind is driven by its terrors ! The king cried aloud for the astrologers, the

Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. Astrologers! Chaldeans! Soothsayers! Wretched confidences, and pitiable monarch who knew no better hope! It is not, however, the reiterated failures of all his worldly dependencies that will induce an unconverted man to seek a better refuge; but, with an infatuated tenacity of grasp, he will hold to his pleasures, his delusions, and his associations, till he perish with the mighty nothings in which he has trusted! Let us be thankful that the revelations of the kingdom of heaven are ours; that a foundation is laid in Zion for a sinful world, which is Jesus Christ, on which we may securely repose for salvation; and that "he that believeth shall not be in confusion."

- 10.—*Now* the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet-house; and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:
- 11.—There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods; and, in the days of thy father, light, and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, *I say*, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.
- 12.—Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.
- 13.—Then was Daniel brought in before the king. *And* the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Dan-

ici, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

- 14.—I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and that light, and understanding, and excellent wisdom is found in thee.
- 15.—And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not show the interpretation of the thing:
- 16.—And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts: now, if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

The interference of the queen upon this occasion presents a pleasing specimen of female kindness. Many suppose it was the queen-mother, or Nicotris. This, however, is not expressed. There must have been much to check and even to alienate affection in a wicked and despotic character; but conjugal fidelity, and the same may be said of maternal love, triumphs in the hour of distress! The adaptation of woman to promote the comfort of life is a gracious provision of God, and the disposition to soothe anxiety, to alleviate suffering, to shield or aid in danger, is alike certain to operate, and honorable to display.

So Belshazzar had forgotten Daniel! He had, indeed, as he intimates, “even heard of him;” but amidst the follies and flatteries of a court he had overlooked his eminent character

and claims. Probably also he dreaded him, for nothing is more detested by a profligate court, or a wicked king, than a faithful, unyielding servant of God. The world will "love its own;" and if Christians expect that their principles or pretensions will be duly estimated by it, they will suffer disappointment. He who "knew what was in man," and foresaw the inevitable effect of a spirit of holy separation and independent action, founded upon love to God, said, "Marvel not if the world hate you."

It need excite no surprise, however, that Belshazzar was profuse in his promises of gain and honor upon this occasion, because his own interest was essentially implicated; and, whatever contempt the men of the world may have for the religion of the people of God, or however they may disregard their virtues, they are sufficiently willing to notice them when their influence can be made subservient to their own advantage; when otherwise they are to be forgotten, or, it may be, ridiculed, misrepresented, and persecuted.

17.—Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18.—O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory and honor:

- 19.—And, for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down.
- 20.—But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:
- 21.—And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.
- 22.—And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;
- 23.—But thou lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath *is*, and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.
- 24.—Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

In Daniel's renunciation of the proffered donations, we have a fine exhibition of *disinterestedness*. The servants of God, especially those in official situations, ought to cultivate this spirit to the utmost; and to assist them in doing so, let such be induced to reflect on their *obligations*—their *vows*—the *example of distinguished saints*—and, above all, on *the character of the Saviour*.

The address of Daniel to the king is distinguished by its *uncompromising faithfulness* : comprising the following important references :—

1. He appeals to a striking fact in Belshazzar's ancestral history, v. 18, 21. The term for *father* is the same as *grandfather*, and it should have been so rendered.

2. He points out the radical defect in the monarch's own character, and the disregard he had manifested of every monition.

3. He charges directly upon his conscience the pride, impenitence, and sacrilegious impiety of his conduct.

4. With fearless resolution he convicts him of his misdeeds, in the presence of all the wealth, rank, beauty, and power of his kingdom.

5. He preaches to him, in plain and pointed language, truths of high import and concern ; as, the supremacy of Jehovah—his providence—his omniscience—and his claims.

25.—And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26.—This is the interpretation of the thing ; MENE: God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27.—TEKEL: thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28.—PERES: thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

29.—Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck,

and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

The signification of the words in Chaldee is literally, "He hath numbered, he hath numbered—he hath weighed—they divide." This was a fearful announcement, and yet the prophet was immediately invested with the promised insignia of distinction and favor. Some of the worst of men are often governed by feelings of honor, where they refuse to submit to the demands of religion. Let Christians learn from this circumstance to adhere, at least as strongly, to the superior principles which they profess. Daniel's acceptance of the gifts after his refusal, proceeded probably from his indifference to them, as much, perhaps, as from the dictates of courtesy and propriety.

The words, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting," admit of an application to many important cases. There is a standard of rectitude and truth, the deviations of our conduct from which will expose us to the judgment of God, whose decisions will be at once impartial and final. While all mankind are guilty in his sight, there are three general circumstances to be regarded as affecting our destiny—our *capacities*—our *advantages*—our *resolutions* and *pledges*. Belshazzar had learned nothing from experience, but "lifted up himself" in proud rebellion against the Almighty. His conduct may remind us that,—

1. Whoever is defective in humility before God, which is the element of all real repentance, is "found wanting."

2. Whoever neglects the monitions of providence, and, where he possesses them, the instructions of scripture, is "found wanting."

3. Whoever prefers a present indulgence to a future and eternal reward, is "found wanting."

4. Whoever shuts his eyes against the light he enjoys—the light of nature, or revelation—is "found wanting."

Various methods of estimating the characters of men are adopted by God, so as to bring home to individual conviction essential defects. Terrific or merciful manifestations have a relation to the peculiarities of sinners in their natural constitution, station, associations, and opportunities. The heathen and the civilized, the wealthy and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the self-righteous and the humble, the hypocrite and the sincere professor, the backslider and the faithful, the worldly and the spiritual, are, with innumerable others, placed under this scrutinizing discipline, to their glory or their shame; and we suggest for serious reflection that they are weighed in four respects:

1. The balances are continually placed at the disposal of *conscience*.

2. They are given to the use of the *christian ministry*.

3. They are placed in the pale hand of death.

4. The *Supreme Judge* will take them into his own hands in the last day.

30.—In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

31.—And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* about threescore and ten years old.

Xenophon states that Gadates and Gobryas, who conducted the army of Cyrus up the bed of the Euphrates, went to the king's palace, and, the doors having been opened to ascertain the cause of the tumult, they rushed in and slew the king who was standing amidst his courtiers, sword in hand. Herodotus relates that "they had passed through the gates, which were left open in this riotous night, and had taken the extreme parts of the city, before those who inhabited the middle parts knew of the capture." HEROD. Lib. 1. XENOPH. Cyrop. This occurred about B. C. 538, after a reign of seventeen years. Darius the Mede, to whom the empire was transferred in conjunction with Cyrus, is the same with Cyaxares, the son of Astyages, and therefore the uncle of the conqueror. How precisely was the prediction of Jeremiah accomplished, "How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid

a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware : thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the Lord." How exact is the prophetic anticipation of Isaiah, " Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates ; and the gates shall not be shut ; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight ; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron ; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel !" The impressive representation by the same prophet of its subsequent condition has been amply verified, " And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation ; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there ; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures : and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate

houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces ;
and her time is near to come, and her days
shall not be prolonged.”

LECTURE X.

DANIEL VI.

- Verse 1.—It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom ;
- 2.—And over these three presidents, of whom Daniel *was* first ; that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.
 - 3.—Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him ; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Xenophon informs us that Cyrus devised the plan of government, with regard to conquered nations, which is here ascribed to Darius. Archbishop Usher, therefore, supposes with great probability that it was first devised by Cyrus, and at his suggestion pursued by Darius. After the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses, and of Thrace and India by Darius Hystaspes, seven provinces were added, making the Persian empire in the time of Esther to consist of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces.

The measures adopted on the occasion of this great conquest, bespeak political sagacity. Under God, the peace and stability of kingdoms depend on the enactment of good laws, and the selection of proper persons to execute the plans of government. The appointment of Daniel resulted from the new king's perception of "an excellent spirit in him," which, however true of his piety, is to be interpreted, in harmony with the ideas of Darius, chiefly as referrible to his intellectual qualities and great experience. He had now been employed in the service of the monarchs of Babylon during the long period of at least sixty-five years. On this occasion he became the second person of the empire in rank; a distinction which roused again into action the demons of jealousy, envy and hatred.

- 4.—Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.
- 5.—Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.

The conspiracy of these presidents and princes was, in the circumstances and principles of it, the greatest possible compliment to Daniel. Their sharp-sighted enmity could detect nothing upon which to ground a charge, in his entire direction of national affairs.

Though his vigilance, penetration, experience, and activity, in despite of his age, exceedingly annoyed them, every attempt to find a flaw, to prove a weakness, or to justify a suspicion either of disloyalty or mal-administration, failed ; and they were driven to the necessity of attacking his piety. Christians, who are called by the providence of God to fill offices in the state, should be peculiarly circumspect lest their political conduct disparage their religious profession. This remark may be applied to the people of God in general, whatever their station in society ; for, as spiritual religion will always be an object of dislike to worldly persons, it should be the concern of every christian so to live in the midst of them as to afford no just occasion for the reproach of inconsistency, either in spirit or deportment. If occasion be sought, let enemies be compelled to seek it in their devoted, and, to them, objectionable piety. This is required, both on account of the cause itself, and as an attestation of the sincerity of their own vows and pledges. A contrary behaviour is detrimental to the best of causes, incompatible with the true character and tendency of our holy faith, and enhances the awfulness of an approaching judgment. Every condition of life is beset with moral difficulties and dangers ; a motive to “ watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.”

- 6.—Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.
- 7.—All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.
- 8.—Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.
- 9.—Wherefore King Darius signed the writing and the decree.

By what arguments or sophistries Darius was persuaded to issue this ridiculous law, we are not informed; one thing is evident, that these nobles—and this was worthy of them as conspirators against so important a life—did not hesitate to approach the king with a wilful untruth. They said, *all* the presidents and princes had consulted; but was not Daniel *one*, though the chief of them, in authority and in reputation? It is the unhappy condition of royalty, even when best sustained by character and prudence, to be exposed to the snares of artifice, the perversions of prejudice, and the falsifications of malignity. Great, too, as the greatest king may be, it is not unfrequent to see him so inveigled by the power and combination of wicked advisers as to lose in a sense all freedom of action. The enforcements of the New Testament, therefore,

are most needful to be regarded ; for surely, both for their own sakes and for that of their people, it becomes us to “ pray for kings and all in authority over us.”

The proposal of these counsellors was a kind of attempt to deify the king, and, by laying on him so flattering an unction, to soften any possible resentment at their intrusiveness or unreasonableness. It was a common practice among Pagans to deify their heroes. This was done both by Horace and Virgil to Augustus, and Pliny to Trajan. In ascribing divine honours to fellow-men, or in their daring to aspire after them, we see the lamentable degradation of our nature ; but it may afford us a profitable lesson. Let us beware of flattery, as at once suspicious in its principle, and dangerous in its tendency ; and while we cannot, and ought not on some accounts to be insensible to that estimation which Solomon denominates “ a good name,” and worthy of a certain degree of solicitude, be it our supreme concern to obtain the approbation of God !

10.—Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house ; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

This is a fine exhibition of character.

“He knew that the writing was signed,”—and he knew too that it was aimed at him, and that it was a compound of malignity and absurdity; but he uttered no reproach, and made no remonstrance, either *with* his persecutors for their injustice, or *against* them, in any appeal to the misguided sovereign. It is a great attainment in christian excellence to be able to maintain silence amidst extreme provocation; and to hold on our way in firm and dignified adherence to the truth amidst the machinations or insults of the world.

“He went into his house”—and for what purpose? Not to devise a counterplot—not to indulge in bitter lamentations over his hard lot, or secret repinings at the conduct of providence—but to *pray*. This was his habit “three times a day,” and he continued the practice as before. Do any plead for an exemption from the duties of devotion or a remission of their frequency? let them observe the conduct of Daniel, who never allowed either the cares of a mighty empire, or the active combination of wicked men to compass his ruin, to interrupt his devotions. While too many endeavour to excuse their religious negligences upon the ground of excessive occupation, there are others who have not even this plausible but unjustifiable plea; on the contrary, in defiance of every remonstrance, every precept, every example, and every dan-

ger, they persist in "living without God in the world."

The holy city, with its temple, was now desolate, but he prayed with "his windows open in his chamber toward Jerusalem." The temple was regarded by the pious Jews as a type of Christ, and the circumstances of its dedication filled their minds with sentiments of the profoundest awe and solemnity. This was the encouragement of Jonah when "cast into the deep, in the midst of the seas." At this extremity he resolved, "I will look again toward thy holy temple." Compare 1 Kings viii. 28—30.

It is worthy of particular notice that Daniel "*gave thanks* before his God, as he did aforetime." A devout heart will discover reasons for gratitude when others can perceive nothing but occasions of lamentation. No condition of life is really so disastrous as to be incapable of suggesting motives to thankfulness to a spiritual man; for the stream of life has always its interminglings of alleviation and comparative good. As this eminent servant of God also was identified in character with those who adorned the earliest annals of the christian church, it is not improbable that he was animated by a spirit similar to that of apostles who "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus." The conduct of Daniel is a severe reproof to those

who, under circumstances of far inferior temptation, conceal their religion for the sake of acquiring gain or evading reproach. This is often as unsuccessful in policy, as it is criminal in principle; and sometimes, even with regard to immediate results, certainly with respect to ultimate consequences, the path of duty is the path of safety. But, as the sequel will show, we must not suffer our judgment to be guided by present appearances.

11.—Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

12.—Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask *a petition* of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

13.—Then answered they, and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the captivity of the children of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a-day.

14.—Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him, and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15.—Then these men assembled unto the king and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16.—Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

17.—And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

It is no less true than lamentable that on many an occasion, since the age of Daniel, men have been condemned for prayer to God as for the highest crime and misdemeanor; and such is the prejudice and perverseness of the wicked that it is questionable whether any *violation of human laws* has been deemed so odious and worthy of punishment as *obedience to the commands of God!*

The king, having suffered himself to be entrapped, could not escape, unless he had pursued the high and honourable, though to himself most dangerous course, of refusing to execute an unrighteous decree. When we consider the folly of the principle recognized by the laws of the Medes and Persians that no royal statute could be changed or abrogated, we have great reason to acknowledge the good providence of God in permitting us to enjoy a civil constitution in which the respective power and rights of king and people are wisely adjusted, so as to become an instrument, not of oppression, but of personal and national prosperity.

The expectation which Belshazzar expresses of the deliverance of Daniel from the peril of the lion's den, if it were nothing more than a

vague hope, was probably produced by a recollection of the circumstances of the escape of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, on a former occasion. He was willing to indulge every thought that could alleviate the anxiety which afflicted him; an anxiety the more distressing that it was produced by his own inconsideration or vanity. It is the bitterest ingredient in the cup of sorrow to know that our own folly or sin has introduced it; while, on the other hand, no alleviation can be greater than conscious rectitude of mind and innocence of conduct.

“They brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions.” The word signifies *pit*, and was probably a deep excavation to prevent the escape of these furious and powerful animals. We shudder at the cruelty of the action, and feel indignant at the baseness of the motive; but “the dark parts of the earth” have ever been “full of the habitations of cruelty,” and will continue to be so till the light of truth shall irradiate, and the energy of the Holy Spirit shall sanctify them. Then, indeed, will the world be no longer an Aceldama,—a field of blood; but the abode of peace, purity, benevolence, and joy.

And do we not pity Daniel? What a deplorable termination, as it appeared, of so distinguished and useful a life! Think of that aged saint, despoiled of all, forsaken of all,

cast in a moment from the light of day into a dungeon where the most ferocious of wild beasts were kept, whose nature would prompt them to tear and rend in pieces this defenceless being. Great as might be the triumphs of faith in that momentous crisis, we cannot but imagine some instinctive emotions of terror as he fell down the awful descent into the lions' mouths. What a passage into eternity! What a contrast to the quietude of home,—the soft and silent tread of love,—the tender sympathies and assiduities of friendship in the hours of a slowly approaching dissolution, the reciprocities of holy converse and a kind farewell; bespeaking a heavenly calm in the one, and a sweet sympathy in the other, and a conjoined assurance of a speedy, happy, and everlasting re-union in brighter worlds! But we proceed with the narrative—

Verse 18.—Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him; and his sleep went from him.

19.—Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20.—And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel; *and* the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21.—Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22.—My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before

him innocency was found in me ; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23.—Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

The miraculous deliverance of Daniel is ascribed to the ministration of an *angel*. Of these exalted intelligences we know little ; but the inspired record relates frequent instances in ancient times of the instrumentality of spirits of this order, in conducting the affairs of the church. If they have not always been permitted to interfere for the rescue of saints from peril, there is reason to believe that they are capable of cherishing a benevolent sympathy with our temporal and moral condition ; and it seems consonant with the best feelings of a sanctified nature, as well as with scripture intimations, to realize the future as a state in which saints will be brought into association of the most improving and elevating kind with their immortal company. Through grace we are privileged to anticipate an introduction to that celestial region, where they walk “ high in salvation and the climes of bliss.”

What a night was that when Darius was sleepless in his palace, and Daniel tranquil, perhaps joyful, in his dungeon ! Who would not pity the miserable monarch ? and who

would not envy the happy martyr? Fever, restlessness, self-reproach, were the demons that haunted the couch of greatness,—“joy and peace in believing,” like spirits of light, beamed on the ground where helpless piety reposed! O for Daniel’s dungeon, rather than Darius’s empire!

Verse 24.—And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

25.—Then King Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you.

26.—I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom, men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end.

27.—He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28.—So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The indignation of Darius now broke forth upon the accusers of Daniel. In this we trace the signal retributions of Providence, though we cannot justify the violence of the king. That he was greatly exasperated, cannot, however, excite surprise, nor that, like his predecessor and grandfather on a similar oc-

oasion, he was deeply impressed by this supernatural manifestation. Evil principles often, even in this world, conduct to an awful end.

We hail the edict as solemn and comprehensive in expression; and it would be pleasing to feel assured that it was dictated by right principles, and by more than a momentary impulse. If, however, the cloud be not entirely removed, we may rejoice in even this degree of light that is cast upon the memory of Darius.

LECTURE XI.

DANIEL VII.

The preceding chapter terminates that part of this book which is strictly historical; the remaining portion comprises the prophetic visions of Daniel himself. The period of time which elapsed during their communication may be estimated at twenty-one or twenty-two years. The first of the series contained in this chapter, is the only one written in the Chaldee language; probably with a primary view to the advantage of the ruling monarch, and, on account of its general similarity of meaning, to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

- 1.—In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, *and* told the sum of the matters.
- 2.—Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.
- 3.—And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

- 4.—And the first was like a lion, and had eagles' wings : I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.
- 5.—And, behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it : and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.
- 6.—After this I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings like a fowl : the beast had also four heads ; and dominion was given to it.
- 7.—After this I saw in the night visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it had great iron teeth ; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it : and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it : and it had ten horns.
- 8.—I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots : and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

It appears that Daniel not only related but wrote his dream. This secured accuracy, and gave permanency to the inspiration for the benefit of succeeding ages. The preservation of this and other records of Scripture demands our grateful acknowledgment to God, whose providence has effectually watched over them, and caused their transmission to our distant times, with the exception of slight literal inaccuracies, in their primitive perfection !

The "great sea" is the usual designation of the Mediterranean, to distinguish it from the

lakes of Judea. The striving of the "four winds of heaven" evidently imports the tumults and commotions of mankind in great political struggles; to the successive results of which the allusions are made in the following description:—

The four beasts plainly correspond with the four monarchies exhibited to Nebuchadnezzar in the image which he saw constructed of different metals, and ultimately demolished by the stone cut out of the mountain. The first is compared to a *lion*. A similar emblem is employed in Jeremiah (chap. iv. 7) "The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way." While the head of gold represents the splendour of the Babylonian monarch and monarchy, this animal portrays its dignity and domination. Its "eagles' wings" indicate the rapidity of its conquests; their being at length "plucked," the diminution and final subversion of the empire, the personal afflictions of Nebuchadnezzar, and the final victory of Cyrus. Its being raised from depression, and having a man's heart, appears to have its antitype in the madness and subsequent restoration of him who was emphatically the head of gold.

The second beast or *bear*, which depicts the Medo-Persian empire, is said to "raise up itself on one *side*," or it raised up one *dominion*, as the word also signifies. It received

in the former sense, the reference may be to the eastern quarter, whence the Persians came, and their elevation above the Medes and Babylonians. If in the latter, the union into one empire of the Medes and Persians. The "three ribs between the teeth" are supposed to mean Babylon, Lybia, and Egypt, who were most severely oppressed by these conquerors. It may also contain an allusion to the destructive character of their warlike progress.

The *leopard* is the Grecian or Macedonian empire; the natural fleetness of the animal elucidating the rapidity of Alexander's progress through a succession of victories to universal empire. Four wings of a fowl are said to have been seen on the back of it, more fully to convey the idea of a combination of activity and swiftness. Some, however, suppose that the union of the empires of Assyria, Media, Persia, and Greece is intended. The beast had "four heads," referring to the four divisions of the empire under the successors of Alexander. "If we reflect on the small beginnings of this power, the difficulties which it surmounted, and the vast strides it made toward universal empire, extending its conquests as far as the Ganges in so short a space as twelve years, (1 Mac. i. 7.) we shall not be at a loss to assign a fair interpretation for the last clause of this verse, and to conclude

that such dominion was the gift of God." (*Wintle.*)

The description of the fourth beast is strikingly illustrative of the Roman power. It is observable that the name of no particular animal is assigned to it; probably because no one could convey a sufficiently impressive emblem of its characteristic strength, cruelty, and fierceness. It had "ten horns," which shadowed forth ten kings or kingdoms, as afterwards explained. These have been variously enumerated by different writers, but all agree in including many of the European as well as Asiatic nations, whose representatives exist at the present day. These correspond with the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The "little horn" has the marks of the papal power. Before this horn three of the first were plucked up by the roots. In the eighth century the three states, the Exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the state of Rome were reduced, and the pope commenced his temporal jurisdiction. As, however, two of these were not primarily among the ten, Faber suggests that the kingdoms of the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Lombards are to be understood, which some have deemed to be a better founded interpretation. The horn having "eyes like the eyes of a man," denotes the exercise of continual vigilance and sagacity, which the papal power

has ever manifested for the advancement of its influence. The "mouth speaking great things" has been amply verified in its imperious dogmatism and blasphemous pretensions.

"The prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and the vision of the four beasts, equally predict that, from the era of the Babylonian monarchy to the commencement of the millennium, there should be *four*, and no more than *four* empires, universal so far as the church is concerned." (*Faber.*)

9.—I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head *like* the pure wool, his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire.

10.—A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

The version of the common Bible, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down," does not appear correct. The rendering of the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic, is, "until the thrones were *set up*." This interpretation is more in accordance with the judicial arrangements immediately described, and is adopted by the Jewish expositors. Comp. Matt. xix. 28; Rev. iv. 4; also the use of the word in Ezra vii. 25.

The "Ancient of days" is described as sitting upon one of the thrones prepared for

his reception, and both his personal glory and judicial retinue are magnificently pourtrayed. That the Almighty God is intended by Ancient of days, is universally admitted. Although, strictly speaking, "days," as a measure of *time*, can have no proper relation to the existence of an eternal Being; they have that necessary relation to *our conceptions*, which affords the data of thinking with some degree of precision upon a subject, whose grandeur must otherwise be dissipated in mere generalities. The psalmist suggests similar ideas to enhance our sentiments of the immortality of the divine essence.

The snowy whiteness of his garment represents his perfect holiness, which is still further illustrated in connexion with wisdom and solemnity in the administration of justice by the hair of his head appearing like wool. The throne being like the fiery flame, points out the terrific character of that searching and uncompromising investigation which would lead to fearful results, and the wheels like burning fire, prognosticate at once his majesty—piercing, penetrating, awful, and the rapid progress of those providential visitations which would bespeak the indignation of a sin-avenging Deity. The pertinency of the description will appear from the remark of Grotius, that the ancient thrones, and "*Sillæ curules*," had wheels. The fiery stream preceding him con-

veys a further idea of holy indignation ; and, connecting it with the preceding verse, some manuscripts read, “ his throne was flames of fire, trailing and issuing from his presence.” The thousands ministering unto him evidently allude to the innumerable multitude of angels, and the concourse of people standing before him refer to the nations that were to be arraigned. The opening of the books imports the deliberate character of that proceeding which should be founded upon the recorded actions of the great delinquents, and which should have respect to the laws and will of God. The *sitting* of the judgment, as thus prepared, has a clear reference to the solemnities and general construction of the Jewish Sanhedrim or Great Council.

The judgment in question is to take place after the monarchies described shall have existed, and after the little horn, or papal power, shall have prevailed in the earth. That the reference is not to the final judgment, or, what is more emphatically called, the “last day,” is evident, because here God the Father is said to occupy that judicial station which, in the New Testament, is universally ascribed to the Son ; and because it is not the judgment of individuals, as when “small and great shall appear before God,” but of nations and of the great anti-christian power. We must bear in continual recollection that this is a

vision, that the circumstances are the decorative arrangements of a court of justice, and of the Jewish council in particular; and that, therefore, like all hieroglyphic symbols, all scriptural allusions to the personal appearance, the form, the countenance, or the hands, arm, and feet of the Almighty, it is a figurative adumbration of the great reality of a just, final, and awful retribution that awaits anti-christian nations.

- 11.—I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld, *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.
- 12.—As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

We have here the execution of that sentence which is prophetically stated to be fulfilled in the destiny of these rebel empires. The destruction of the Roman hierarchy is particularly specified. This “horn” for *power*, this “beast” for *vileness*, being idolatrous and persecuting, shall be slain, destroyed, and punished, in the burning flame of divine indignation. “The prophecy of Daniel has here reached the fall of the spiritual Babylon of St. John, previous to the introduction of the kingdom of the Messiah. The lake of fire of the one is the same as the burning flame (or burning of fire) of the other, into

which the body of the beast was seen to be cast." Compare Rev. xiv. 8, &c., and xvi. 19.

The "rest of the beasts" signifies the three other empires, the Babylonian, Persian, and Macedonian, who had their dominion taken away, as history has long since recorded; but "whose lives were prolonged,"—that is, though no more possessed of empire, yet their influence and impious principles still continued to operate, notwithstanding their temporal demolition.

13.—I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.

14.—And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

An additional circumstance of great interest now presents itself in this prophetic scenery. We cannot mistake the name which characterizes "the Mediator of the New Covenant," who as the "Son of man" assumed our nature with its infirmities, took our place with its awful curse and responsibilities, and became "head over all things to the church." His "coming in the clouds" implies the dignity and splendour of the manifestation, but can no more be

justly deemed literal than the garment and the hair and the wheels of the Ancient of days. He came to the Ancient of days, and they, the heavenly retinue, brought him before him. And for what purpose? To receive a kingdom, which should be characterized by its extent and by its perpetuity.

This vision, then, has two distinct parts; and each details events from the commencement to the termination of a series of ages. The first portrays the history of the four great monarchies and the anti-christian power till its destruction, that is, from the period of 600 years before the advent of Christ to the commencement of the millenium; the second, from the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah, till the termination of it in the universal spread of Christianity after the overthrow of anti-christian empires. Thus, amidst the prevalence of impiety, idolatry, infidelity, Mohammedanism, popery, and whatever else exalts itself against God, we are cheered by the prospect of their ultimate and eternal destruction; while, amidst the depressions of the true religion, the restrictions of its influence, the oppositions and persecutions of the world, amidst all its present and long-existing sufferings, reproaches, and insignificance, we are invited to rejoice in the assurance of its final, glorious, unrivalled, and never-fading pre-eminence.

- 15.—I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me.
- 16.—I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.
- 17.—These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth.
- 18.—But the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.
- 19.—Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were* of iron, and his nails *of* brass; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;
- 20.—And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows.
- 21.—I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;
- 22.—Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.
- 23.—Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.
- 24.—And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.
- 25.—And he shall speak *great* words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time.
- 26.—But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy *it* unto the end.

- 27.—And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.
- 28.—Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me : but I kept the matter in my heart.

These verses contain an explicit interpretation of the preceding vision, in accordance with which we have endeavoured to frame our explanations. Daniel, it appears, was deeply affected with what he saw, and in his dream applied to "one of them that stood by," that is, an angel, for the developement of these mysteries. He was then assured of the emblematic reference of what he saw to the four great empires, and, upon a further inquiry into the meaning of the symbols, he received information respecting the fourth beast, and the horns in particular. In these verses we have an additional intimation respecting the persecuting spirit of the little horn, which "made war with the saints"—a deep aggravation of its other guilt, as evinced in boast and blasphemy. The saints of the Most High are said to *take the kingdom*, that is, the rule of the world by a moral and spiritual, not a military, operation. It would ill comport with the spirit of christianity to suppose an ambitious seizure of empire ; but it is precisely consonant with its principles, and with the

continual aim of the people of God, to interpret this of a subjugation and acquired dominion by the force of evidence, argument, and example—such “a compelling of them to come in,” as ministers and missionaries daily use in exhibiting the glory and the grace of Christ, urging their compliance with his claims, and appealing against the aversion of their hearts and the pertinacity of their resistance.

A particular period of time is here specified. Times and laws are said to be given into the hands of the little horn or power that should speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints, “*until a time, and times, and the dividing of time.*” It has been before seen that by *time* in prophetic language is signified a year; by *times*, of course two years; by the *dividing of time*, half a year. But a prophetic year is 360 prophetic days or years; therefore these three years and a half correspond with 1260 years, which synchronises with another period in prophecy of forty-two months, the season during which the apocalyptic witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth and antichrist to exist. The computation must be made from the period when the little horn or ecclesiastical power of the church of Rome should arise. That application of the prophecy is the most probable, which fixes on the time, when,

by the decree of Phocas, the Roman pontiff was constituted *universal bishop, and supreme head of the church*. This was in the year of our Lord 606. This being admitted, the 1260 years of ecclesiastical domination would bring us to A. D. 1866.

LECTURE XII.

DANIEL VIII.

Verse 1.—In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, *even unto me Daniel*, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

2.—And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

3.—Then I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns, and the *two* horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

4.—I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will and became great.

5.—And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west, on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground; and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes.

6.—And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

7.—And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and

- brake his two horns ; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him ; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.
- 8.—Therefore the he-goat waxed very great : and when he was strong, the great horn was broken ; and for it came up four notable ones, toward the four winds of heaven.
- 9.—And out of one of them came forth a little horn which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land*.
- 10.—And it waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven ; and it cast down *some* of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.
- 11.—Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.
- 12.—And an host was given *him* against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground ; and it practised, and prospered.
- 13.—Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision concerning the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot ?
- 14.—And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.
- 15.—And it came to pass, when I, *even* I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.
- 16.—And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of Ulai*, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision.
- 17.—So he came near where I stood, and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face ; but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man ; for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision.
- 18.—Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep

- sleep on my face toward the ground ; but he touched me, and set me upright.
- 19.—And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation : for at the time appointed the end *shall be*.
- 20.—The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia.
- 21.—And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia : and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king.
- 22.—Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.
- 23.—And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.
- 24.—And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power : and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.
- 25.—And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand ; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace he shall destroy many : he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes ; but he shall be broken without hand.
- 26.—And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true : wherefore shut thou up the vision ; for it *shall be* for many days.
- 27.—And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days : afterward I rose up, and did the king's business ; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

In this chapter, according to Faber, whose interpretation appears to be on good grounds now universally adopted, the prophet records the history of the *Mohammedan imposture*. This vision was exhibited to Daniel in the third year of Belshazzar. Some have sup-

posed he was *at* Shushan, or Susa, afterwards the metropolis of the Persian Empire ; but the words do not necessarily import more than that he was so in imagination, standing on the bank of the Ulai, or Eulæus, the river which divided Susiana from the province of Elam, a part of Persia.

“ He beheld a ram with two horns ; one of which was higher than the other (v. 3.) This signified the kings, that is, kingdoms or united empire of Media and Persia (v. 20.) The Median empire was the most ancient, but the Persian, which “ came up last,” was the most illustrious. A ram was the royal ensign of the Persians, and rams’ heads, with horns one longer than the other, are still traceable, says Marcellinus (*lib. xix.*) on the pillars of Persepolis.

The ram “ pushed,” or butted, “ westward,” subduing Babylonia, Syria, and Asia Minor—“ northward,” beyond the Caspian sea into the territories of the Scythians,—“ southward to Arabia, India, Egypt, and Ethiopia ; and thus became “ great” or exceeding powerful (v. 4.)

A “ he-goat came from the west,” which is interpreted (v. 21) of the king, or kingdom of Grecia, or Macedonia. This was the emblem used by this nation, in consequence of their first king Caranus adopting it, upon settling at Edessa, whither he was guided, according

to the direction of the oracle by goats. He called it *Ægeæ*, or *the Goat's Town*. He "touched not the ground;" a phrase which describes the rapidity of Alexander's conquests; or, as may be better rendered, according to the Syriac, "nothing touched or hindered him in the earth,"—he met with no material obstacle to his progress. He had a "notable horn between his eyes," that is, his power was great, and his sagacity conspicuous; or in v. 21, by "king," may be intended the *kingdom* in the usual prophetic sense of the term, which kingdom, continued through the life of Alexander, of his brother Aridæus, and of his two sons, Alexander and Hercules.

The goat is seen to rush upon the ram in a furious manner, and smite him, and break his two horns, and throw him down and stamp upon him (v. 6, 7.) The troops of Alexander were incomparably inferior in number to those of the Persian monarch, whom he nevertheless vanquished in three great battles, and pursued him as a fugitive, till Darius was slain by his own servants. Opposition was now at an end, and the Medo-Persian empire trodden under foot by the haughty conqueror. "One can hardly read these words (v. 6) without having," says Bishop Newton, "some image of Darius's army standing and guarding the river Granicus, and of Alexander on the other side with his forces plunging in swimming

across the stream, and rushing on the enemy with all the fire and fury that can be imagined. It was certainly a strange, rash, mad attempt, with only about 35,000 men, to attack, at such disadvantage, an army of more than five times the number; but he was successful in it, and this success diffused a terror of his name, and opened his way to the conquest of Asia."

But the "great horn" of this impetuous and self-deemed invincible he-goat was soon "broken," even *while he was yet in his strength*; and four sprung up in its stead (v. 8,) but "not in his power" (v. 22.) After Alexander's return to Babylon, which he proposed to make the seat of his empire, and while busily engaged in preparations for future conquest and a lasting dominion, he was unexpectedly, and as in a moment, removed by a fever. "Ambassadors from southern Greece now came to present Alexander with golden crowns; and these, on advancing to his presence, appeared in the sacred garlands, which were never worn by deputies except when commissioned to consult oracles, or to carry gifts to the shrines of distant deities. But while these servile republicans hailed him with divine honors—while the bravest and best disciplined army on the face of the earth loved him as their leader, and revered him as their king—while his newly-created fleet was furrowing with unwonted keels the bosom of the

Euphrates, and preparing to spread its sails on seas unknown—while he was anticipating the fulfilment of his early dreams of becoming the master of the gold, the aromatics, the myrrh, and the frankincense of the hitherto untouched Sabæa, and of compelling the sons of the desert to add a third god to their scanty Pantheon—while he was preparing to forge the last link of the golden chain which was to bind together his subjects on the Indus, the Tigris, and the Nile, by the strong ties of mutual advantages—the scene was suddenly changed, and he was cut down in the prime of life, in the height of his glory, and in the middle of his vast projects.” *William’s Life of Alexander.* page 340—and 351—

How strikingly verified was the prophetic record, and how affectingly impressive to contemplate is the termination of that extraordinary conqueror whom the world calls “Great!” Let pride and vain glory survey this earth, the field of ambition and of mortality, and learn to repress the rising emotions of delight in the pursuits, possessions, and distinctions of this dream of being; let christian piety survey, too, the scene, and cherish more exalted feelings of joy in the moral victory over mortal things and mortal passions, even now achieved by its energy, and the bright hopes permitted to be entertained through him who is “the resurrection and

the life," of deliverance from death, and "the glory that shall follow."

When the great horn was broken, "four notable ones" (v. 8,) or "four kingdoms arose out of the ruined nation, but of inferior power (v. 22.) These are identical with the four heads of the leopard in the preceding chapter, and describe the four kingdoms into which the empire was resolved, under the successors of Alexander; extending to the "four winds of heaven," that is, to Egypt on the south, Thrace and the Lesser Asia on the north, Babylonia and Syria on the east, and Greece on the west.

Our attention is now directed to "a little horn," which became powerful in the south and east, and "toward the pleasant land," or Judea (v. 9.) It is seen to be exceedingly aspiring, oppressive to the people of God, and insulting to the "prince of the host," or Jesus, who is "head over all things to the church" (v. 10, 11.) In the subsequent explanation this power is represented as a "king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences," or enigmas, who should arise "in the latter time of their kingdom." He was to destroy "the mighty and the holy people," to be very crafty, but should be finally "broken without hand," or destroyed by the immediate power of the great head of the church, whom he had impiously opposed (v. 23, 25.) This

little horn is besides said "to cast down the *truth* to the ground," which seems to characterize its hostility to the christian religion, aiming, therefore, more at spiritual than at temporal domination. As the little horn, in the previous chapter, which is described as springing up among the ten horns of the Roman beast, represents a spiritual, or ecclesiastical dominion, namely, the Papacy, so the little horn of the Grecian he-goat must be regarded as denoting a similar kind of power.

It is now generally agreed that Faber has suggested the only correct interpretation of this vision. No previous theory was satisfactory; and we, therefore, follow him in considering it as descriptive of the rise, progress, and destruction of MOHAMMEDANISM. It is deeply affecting to think that the Church of Christ once existed where, for ages past, this delusion has prevailed, where a Christian and a dog are synonymous terms, and where Christians and Jews are only permitted, by the payment of a capitation-tax "to wear," as the Firman expresses it, "their heads for that year."

Mohammed was born in Mecca. His education was contracted, and his younger days devoted to commercial and warlike pursuits. By his marriage with the widow of an opulent merchant he rose to distinction in his native city. For several years he frequently

retired into the cave of Hera and cherished his enthusiastic sentiments, till, at the age of forty, he stated that he had held communication with the angel Gabriel, and was appointed a Prophet and Apostle of God. In 612, he publicly announced to his relatives and friends, that he had ascended through seven heavens to the very throne of Deity, under the guidance of Gabriel, and had received the salutations of patriarchs, prophets, and angels. This monstrous statement, however, did not succeed, except with a very few; and on the death of his uncle, Abu-Taleb, who had been his powerful protector, he was compelled, in 622, to seek security by flight to Medina. This henceforth became the epoch of Mohammedan chronology. His power was now consolidated and his influence extended by a large accession of deluded, but determined, followers. He very soon professed to have received instructions from the angel Gabriel to propagate his religion by the sword; and power made him a persecutor. In seven years, he became the sovereign of Mecca, and this led to the subjugation of all Arabia, which was followed by that of Syria. "In less than a century, from the period of its rise in the barren wilds of Arabia, the Mohammedan religion extended over the greatest part of Asia and Africa, and threatened to seat itself in the heart of Europe." The unity of God

was a leading article of Mohammed's creed. When addressing the Jews he professed highly to honour Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets, and admitted, for the sake of conciliating Christians, that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews, and will be the Judge of all. This compromising policy is seen in the Koran. Mohammedan morals enforce many principles of justice and benevolence, and inculcate a degree of self-denial; but at the same time permit the indulgences of some of the strongest passions of our nature. The representations given of paradise are adapted to gratify the sensuality of men; and of hell, to awaken their fears of disobeying the Koran or the Prophet. "Eastern Christendom," says Mr. Foster, "at once the parent and the prey of hydra-headed heresy, demanded and deserved precisely the infliction which the rod of a conquering heresiarch could bestow."

The "king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences," well expresses the character of Mohammed and his religion. "Mohammed," says Gibbon, "with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Chistianity and of Rome. The genius of the Arabian prophet, the manners of his nation, and the spirit of his religion, involve the causes of the decline and fall of the eastern empire, and our eyes are curiously intent on one of the most

memorable revolutions, which have impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the globe." The first efforts of this impostor were directed against the Jews, who refused to receive Mohammed's effusions as the revelations of heaven, and, in consequence, suffered the loss of their possessions and lives. "When Christian churches," says Scott, "were converted into mosques, the 'daily sacrifices' might be said to be 'taken away,'" (v. 11, 12,) and the numbers of nominal Christians who were thus led to apostatize, and of real Christians and ministers, who perished by the sword of this warlike, persecuting power, fulfilled the prediction, that "he cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped on them." It is said that "a host was given him against the daily sacrifice (or worship of the Christian church, corresponding with the Jewish sanctuary) by reason of transgression." A rival priesthood subverted the priesthood of a degenerate church. The Imams of Mohammed assumed the place of the apostate teachers of Christianity. The event here predicted was to occur in the latter part of the Grecian empire [v. 23,] and when "the transgressors are come to the full," or the apostacy, that is, the papal apostacy, is fully developed; which corresponded with the fact. History relates that the remains of the eastern empire and

the power of the Greek church were overthrown by Mohammedans. Their chief endeavoured to diffuse his doctrine, but found that it could not prevail by "*its own power*," or the inherent moral strength of the system; it was requisite to support his pretensions by force, but he exerted at the same time great "craft" and "policy." Mohammed sanctioned as much of the inspired Scriptures as he thought might tend to obviate the prejudices of the Jews, and incorporated as much of his own system with the errors of the eastern church as might tend to conciliate Greek Christians. Although Mohammedanism did not at first spring up in the Macedonian empire, yet it soon spread from Arabia to Syria, and "*occupied locally, as well as authoritatively, the ancient dominion of the he-goat.*"—*Scott*. It has been remarked, however, by Mr. Forster, [*Mohammedanism Unveiled,*] that the part of Arabia which included the native country of Mohammed, composed an integral province both of the empire of Alexander and of the Ptolemæan kingdom of Egypt. Ptolemy had Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Cælosyria, and Palestine.

One saint is described as addressing another with the question, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under

foot?" The answer is, "*Unto 2300 days.*" These days are prophetic, that is, they symbolize years; curiosity, therefore, is naturally eager to ascertain the chronology of this prediction. It is some clue to the commencement of the period, to remark that Daniel does not refer to the *origin* of the monarchy, but to some period afterwards, when it is become a settled government, because the Medo-Persian ram does not rise from the sea, but stands, already grown, upon the margin of the river. Cyrus and Darius were conquerors, but it was not till the seventh year of Artaxerxes that the empire had attained its strength. The Medo-Persian ram rose in the year B. C., 536, and continued to stand, till B. C., 330: the date of the vision, therefore, is between these years.

We are informed that the time, times, and a half, or 1260 days, reach to the end of the wonders, [ch. xii. 7, 9,] and here [v. 17, 19,] that the vision of the ram and he-goat extends to "the time of the end," or "the last end of the indignation." Hence it follows that they terminate together. That the period in question is still future is obvious, because the Jewish sanctuary has long been desolate, and the Jews are not yet converted or restored—an event joyous to the church, which the "cleansing of the sanctuary" foretells. This eventful period, however, cannot be far dis-

tant, and, let it be borne in mind, that as Popery and Mohammedanism arose nearly together, so they are destined to perish together, both meeting their final overthrow at the time of the end.

How cheering is the fact, that, whatever forms of error and delusion arise in the earth, they can neither reach in extent of influence or in duration of time beyond the limits which an omniscient intelligence has predetermined! Increasingly cheering is the assurance which prophecy, even imperfectly understood, affords, that we are living at the very eve of the fulfilment of those long-recorded events, the downfall of papal, and the destruction of Mohammedan delusions. Their reign has been terrible and protracted; but the crescent is already on the wane, and the crucifix is about to be superseded by the cross. The false prophet and the man of sin are both consigned to an inevitable doom, while the "Sun of righteousness" is rising upon rejoicing nations with an ever brightening glory. It is written in heaven—it is fulfilling on earth—"he must increase."

LECTURE XIII.

DANIEL IX. 1—19.

- Verse 1.—In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans ;
- 2.—In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

The monarch here mentioned is the same person with the Cyaxares of heathen historians, to whose father, called by the Jews Ahasuerus, they give the name of Astyages.

The passages in Jeremiah from which Daniel obtained his information respecting the duration of the Babylonish captivity are contained in the twenty-fifth and twenty-ninth chapters, (Jerem. xxv. 9—12; and xxix. 10, 11,) whence it is obvious that the sacred writings were not destroyed in this national calamity, and their preservation must have proved an eminent benefit to the captive Jews.

It has been before intimated that Daniel was not prevented by the multiplicity of his public engagements from devoting portions of time each day to the duty of private prayer ; and now it appears he united with it the reading of the inspired books. Nor did he deem it sufficient to glance over them in that cursory and careless manner which is too often indicative of a want of real interest in their contents ; but he appears to have investigated them in the spirit of devout inquiry. "He understood by books the number of the years." The Scriptures throw a great light upon events, particularly as connected with the history of the church of God, and will repay the most diligent research. He who pleads as an apology for neglecting them, any worldly occupations, will find no countenance in the conduct of men like Daniel, who, though high in station and full of business, highly appreciated and improved his few privileges. By means of these holy writings, though we may not be able to unravel all the intricacies and penetrate all the depths of providence, we shall discover great principles which are applicable to particular dispensations, and may learn from transactions like those connected with the captivity, that the calamities of the church, as well as the sorrows of individuals, are righteous in their appointment, wise in their administration, and proportioned

to the necessities of the case in their degree and duration. We learn also, that God never forsakes his people in their afflictions, is never at a loss for means to accomplish their deliverance, and fails not, if our folly do not prevent, to educe good from apparent evil.

3.—And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

It is observable, that this eminent saint did not presume that even a direct promise of deliverance superseded the necessity of humiliations and prayer. He knew that he who waited to be gracious, nevertheless would be inquired of by the house of Israel—that if the sceptre of protection and favour were held out, it must be touched by faith to experience the benefit. How little have the great of this world imitated this example; forgetting that they are more truly great as well as blessed when pouring out their hearts before God, for themselves and their country, in the prostrations of piety, than when conquering in the ensanguined field, or ruling on the golden throne.

This language imports the appropriation of some special seasons of prayer for the express object now become so dear to his heart and so important to his nation. When there is a peculiar pressure of affliction upon ourselves,

or our beloved country, or any portion of the human family, it is incumbent to set apart especial hours of intercession on that account; and, in general, it would be highly advantageous, to devote particular times to particular and specific objects of devotional supplication.

“Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes,” were the tokens of mourning and humiliation on extraordinary occasions, and were evidently calculated to affect the mind with suitable emotions. As the indulgence of the appetites and the love of splendour are unbefitting a period of personal or national distress, so abstinence, seclusion, and mean attire, evince a correspondence of mind with the occasions of grief. The prayer of Daniel is a fine specimen of some of its most essential elements, and divides itself into three parts; the first is the *address*.

4.—And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.

Daniel first appeals to the Most High, as “the great and dreadful God.” This was adapted to the occasion. The majesty and awful character of God were seen in his dispensations, and were rightly, as they are solemnly recognized. The emphatic letter of

the Hebrew (η) is used before each of the epithets, and throws immense force into the expressions,—“ O Lord, *the God, the great, the tremendous !*” In the common practice of Christians, the unnecessary multiplication of epithets in addressing the Deity, must be detrimental to emotion and success, and is sometimes even repulsive. There can scarcely be appropriate feeling where discrimination is wanting ; because, instead of special pleas, founded on conscious need, the intensity of the mind is dissipated in loose generalities. This is a fault which, especially in the social exercises of devotion, should be carefully avoided.

The other part of this address is equally suited to the object of this special prayer. The Jews were a people with whom God had entered, in a peculiar sense, into *covenant*, and to whom he had remarkably displayed his *mercy*. He had been faithful to his declarations, and the prophet sought to console his mind and to encourage his faith with the prospect of national deliverance, which was now beginning to irradiate the horizon in that season of darkness, depression, and apparent abandonment. A God “ keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him,” is the sheet anchor of faith in the tempests of life.—The second part in the prayer of Daniel is the *confession*.

- Verse 5.—We have sinned and have committed iniquity and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments :
- 6.—Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.
- 7.—O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee ; but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day : to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.
- 8.—O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.
- 9.—To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him :
- 10.—Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us, by his servants the prophets.
- 11.—Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice ; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.
- 12.—And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil : for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.
- 13.—As *it is* written in the law of Moses all this evil is come upon us : yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.
- 14.—Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us : for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth : for we obeyed not his voice.

15.—And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly:

Among others, the following points may be noticed, as hints for reflection.

1. The *large proportion* of this part of Daniel's intercessions. It was not a hasty and formal acknowledgment, but his sins and those of his people occupied a principal share of his thoughts.

2. The *reiteration* of phrases descriptive of sin, exemplifying *the depth of his penitential sorrow*. Though there may sometimes exist a pharisaical expectation of being heard for our "much speaking," yet there are other occasions when repetitions are truly expressive of a heart overwhelmed with a sense of the divine glory, and of personal guilt and unworthiness. When the mind is much affected, it naturally dwells upon an idea and repeats it.

3. The *simplicity of the diction*. There are no ornamented or rhetorical descriptions; and in devotion there should be nothing either self-flattering, studied, or to "please a fellow creature's ear."

4. The *minuteness of the detail* (v. 5, 6, 10.) Prayer should be specific as well as fervent. A particular enumeration of our sins is provo-

cative of repentance, as the mention of mercies excites and renews gratitude.

5. The *profound humility* which is indicated in the language of the confession.

6. The *vindication of God* with regard to all his proceedings, and the *spirit of self-reproach* which pervades the whole.

7. The *high estimation expressed of the mercy and forgiveness of God* (v. 9,) notwithstanding the punishment inflicted, and during the continuance of the national calamities. With this is connected a reference (v. 15,) to the signal manifestations of the divine power and goodness in their previous history.—The third part of Daniel's prayer is the *petition*.

Verse 16.—O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become a reproach to all that are about us*.

17.—Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary *that is desolate*, for the Lord's sake.

18.—O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.

19.—O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Although national blessings and deliverance are here especially solicited, yet it is only as subservient to religion. Daniel adverts indeed to the reproaches of their neighbours, the Edomites, Moabites, Philistines and others, and to the *desolations* they have suffered ; still he was chiefly concerned for the injury which seemed to be inflicted on religion, and the disparagement of the divine glory which resulted from the suppression of its ordinances by the overthrow of the holy city. This prayer, therefore, was eminently *spiritual* in its character and objects. The glory of God, comprehensive indeed of their good, is nevertheless, the supreme desire—the all-absorbing wish of the righteous.

The supplications of this distinguished servant of God were also offered with *great fervour and importunity*. This is particularly exemplified in the nineteenth verse. To this important element of prayer our attention particularly is pointed in the New Testament. Compare Luke xviii.

The *genuine faith evinced, and the right foundation* upon which these earnest entreaties were presented, are also observable. There is a most assiduous exclusion of all self-righteous principles, and a distinct and powerful reference to the infinite compassion and grace of God. In the remarkable conclusion of the seventeenth verse, “for the Lord’s

sake," reference appears to be made to the Messiah, *propitiation*. Here alone is hope; but it is all-sufficient for a fallen sinner, a fallen nation, a fallen world! Through the blood of Christ all sins are pardoned; to his atoning sacrifice let all eyes, all hearts, be confidently turned. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

LECTURE XIV.

DANIEL IX. 20—27.

Verse 20.—And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God ;

21.—Yea, while I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22.—And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23.—At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

The first of these verses furnishes additional evidence of Daniel's solicitude for the ordinances of religion, whose interruption constituted, in his view, the dreariest feature in the desolations of Jerusalem. He presented the most fervent supplications for "the holy

mountain of his God ;” alluding to the temple erected on a rock. The thoughts of the pious Jews were incessantly turned to that central spot of spiritual illumination ; but in the present enlarged economy of mercy, Jew and Gentile are alike invited to contemplate God as in every place, and to “worship him in spirit and in truth.”

“While he was speaking” Daniel enjoyed this remarkable manifestation. This affords great encouragement to prayer ; for, although answers from above may not be either so instantaneous or so visible, yet we may feel assured of the divine complacency in the supplications of his people, and the certainty of obtaining, in times and modes the most appropriate, the blessings which are provided by the wisdom and grace of our heavenly Father for confiding faith and importunate prayer.

Gabriel had before been seen in vision (chap. viii. 16), and now “flew swiftly” to this holy suppliant, as one who had to announce a message of the utmost importance, and felt a deep interest in the communication. The Scriptures furnish very striking proofs of the ministrations of angels ; and, whatever mysteries may involve the subject, we may derive consolation from the fact ; as it not only bespeaks the care of providence over good men, but seems to furnish a link of even present con-

nexion with the higher order of beings belonging to the associations of a holier world.

“He touched me,” says Daniel, “about the time of the evening oblation” or three in the afternoon. The sacrifice and time being both so distinctly marked, can scarcely fail of leading our thoughts to Christ, the one offering for sin, and the concentration of prophetic events in his personal work and predicted empire.

Daniel is assured by the heavenly messenger “thou art greatly beloved,” for which reason he was selected as the depository of these prophetic revelations. The estimation in which he was held by successive potentates, the public honors he received, the eminent rank he held, all fade into nothingness before this testimony from heaven—a testimony founded on no external glory, but on a character invulnerable to reproaches, and formed of all the elements of pure religion.—The explanation of future events is now given.

Verse 24.—Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

25.—Know, therefore, and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, *shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks* : the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26.—And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27.—And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

When we recollect that, in the former part of the chapter, Daniel expressly refers to the prophecy of Jeremiah, respecting the termination of the captivity of the seventy years, and directs his solemn prayer peculiarly to this event, it seems to justify the conclusion, that there was some reference to this period of the return of the Jews and the restoration of the temple worship, which the prophet was rightly anticipating; but it is as if the spirit of prophecy had said, “while this period of the Babylonish captivity is expiring, learn that there is another number of *seventy* which this adumbrates, and which marks the time of a more glorious deliverance and a more sublime manifestation. It is the coming of the ‘Messiah the prince;’ the chronology of which event is, in especial favour, granted to thee, that by an antedate the most clear and plain, the faith of future ages may be confirmed.”

An intimation is here given that after the lapse of a certain period of prophetic years,

a sacrifice should be offered which would supersede the legal offerings, and, by atoning for human guilt, finish transgression or remove the curse, "make an end of sins," and accomplish the long promised objects of divine mercy. Then would the "most Holy be anointed" or the Messiah dedicated to his work, and made the priest of his people. To "seal up the vision and prophecy," signifies to fulfil the predictions of former ages, and confirm them, by making the events correspond with the prophecies respecting the Messiah.

The time from "the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the Messiah," was to be "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;" after which he was to be "cut off." The question, therefore, respects the commencement and termination of this period. Four edicts for the restoration of the city are mentioned in Scripture; namely, that in the first year of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), that in the second year of Darius (Ezra vi. 1; Hag. i. 1), that in the seventh of Artaxerxes (Ezra vii. 7), and that in the twentieth year of the same monarch (Neh. i. 2.) As the two former edicts refer only to the rebuilding of the temple, it has been thought by many interpreters that the period is to be dated from the third, that is, the edict in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, when the dispersed Jews became a body politic under Ezra, who was appoint-

ed to govern according to the law of God and of the king. But as no allusion is made to the building of the "walls and streets" till the decree issued in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, it is to the latter it seems most proper to refer the commencement of the prophecy.

The first division of the time is "seven weeks" or forty-nine years, in which the street and wall were to be built "in troublous times," which corresponds with the fact of the virulent opposition of the enemies of the Jews. "But it came to pass, *that* when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come *and* to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."

The second division is that of "sixty-two weeks," to be added to the former, which make 483 years. As the twentieth year of Artaxerxes was B. C., 445, the period of 483 years would terminate in the thirty-third year of our Saviour.

We are then informed that "the people of the Prince shall come and destroy the sanctuary," and that this should be as with a flood and desolations "unto the end of the war." The destruction of Jerusalem, which was

afterwards accomplished by the Romans, was attended with awful devastations; when their idolatrous banners waved triumphantly over the hallowed scenes of religion, and more than a million and a half of people, during the war and at its close, were taken captive, slain, or scattered to perish miserably in the dens and caves of the earth.

To advance their object of bringing the war with the Jews to a successful issue, the Romans entered into a covenant of peace and alliance with the Medes, Parthians, Armenians, and other nations; which appears to be signified by the prediction, "He the (prince,) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week," in *the midst* of which (or in the half part, that is the latter half,) the sacrifice and oblation were to cease. When Jerusalem was closely besieged by Titus, it is related by Josephus, that, through the divisions among the people, together with the want of time, men, and animals, the daily sacrifice ceased, to the great grief of the people. By the "overspreading of abominations," is probably to be understood the idolatrous ensigns of the Roman army, which Titus brought into the ruins of the temple over against the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there; they being accounted, according to Tacitus, the divinities of the army. It is also declared that the desolation should con-

time "even until the consummation" or the full accomplishment of that which is determined, which "shall be poured upon the desolate." This may express the utter destruction of the city and Jewish polity, and the dispersion of the people; but, more probably, it ought to be understood of the fulfilment of the time allotted to the Gentiles to tread down the holy city, which connects this prophecy with those of preceding chapters respecting the fourth monarchy. The word rendered "shall be poured," is a metaphorical term borrowed from the fusion of metals, and represents the melancholy state of this once distinguished people, who are melted down and poured out among all nations, until the *consummation* of those events which will introduce the great crisis of the world. The Jews are so fully aware of the character of this prophecy, that, to deter persons from studying it, they denounce the following curse, "Let their bones rot that compute the times." The accuracy of all these statements is demonstrative of the inspiration under which they were written, while the immediate hand of God in the punishment of the Jews, for their rejection of the Messiah, is signally displayed. It is a remarkable passage of Philostratus, wherein he says, that when the neighbouring nations wished to crown Titus on account of his victory, he declared that he

was unworthy of the honour, as he had not himself been the author of these works, but had only lent his hands to the Deity, who was demonstrating his resentment against the Jews. (De Vit. Apollon., lib. 6.)

Let the manifestation of the Son of God in our nature, to die for sin, engage our frequent meditation, and inspire grateful joy. How wonderfully were all previous events guided to this issue! The earlier communications of divine mercy were like rills that watered a perishing land; but on Calvary they met in confluent abundance, and became a "fountain for sin and uncleanness." Thither all may repair, that, like the Syrian who cleansed his leprosy in Jordon, we may, invited to this better remedy for a viler disease, "wash and be clean."

LECTURE XV.

DANIEL X.

Verse 1.—In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

2.—In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

3.—I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

The revelation made at this time to Daniel is emphatically marked as “true,” that the faith of the church might not be shaken by those apparently contravening events or mysterious occurrences which might arise to confound human calculation during the long succession of ages contemplated in the prediction. “The time” was “appointed” by him who sits supreme upon the universe, and whose determinations could not be frustrated

by the confusion of human affairs or the combination of evil spirits; and, though the period in question would be "long" or distant, nothing could prevent its accomplishment. Those doubts and fears therefore which we are apt to indulge, in relation to personal changes or public vicissitudes, are unreasonable, and ought to be dismissed.

The prophets did not always comprehend their own predictions, but, in the present instance, Daniel was permitted to have "understanding of the vision." Futurity, so far as regards our individual interests, is wisely concealed from us, lest by producing despondency or undue elation we should be unfitted for present duty; but the broad outline and sometimes the characteristic events of history are given by anticipation, at once to signalize individuals by special favour, to afford a ground of consolation or a subject of inquiry to the suffering church, and to supply incontrovertible evidence of the truth of inspiration.

Daniel states that he mourned and lived abstemiously during three full weeks. This appears to have been a season of voluntary humiliation, for which his sensitive piety would perceive various reasons; as his personal transgressions, the opposition experienced in the rebuilding of the city and temple, the reluctance of many of the Jews to return to Jerusalem and co-operate in the work, and

the predicted conduct of his nation when Messiah should be "cut off." A mind under the prevalent influence of spiritual sentiments, will always find ample occasions of secret and solemn-self abasement. Although the present economy of mercy might seem to exempt Christians from the necessity of special fasting and prayer, which less joyous circumstances might generally require, yet these were evidently resorted to in primitive times as they are recognized in the New Testament, and have ever since been the approved practice of the most devoted servants of Christ.

Among the Jews there appear to have been two kinds of fasting, namely, a total and a partial abstinence from food, or food of a superior quality. They never anointed themselves, according to the eastern custom, in seasons of mourning; and in the Mischna (Cod. Joma, c. 7) there is a precept to this purpose, where on the day of expiation they are interdicted meat and drink, washing and anointing.

- 4.—And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;
- 5.—Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:
- 6.—His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.
- 7.—And I Daniel alone saw the vision; for the men that:

- were with me saw not the vision, but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.
- 8.—Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.
- 9.—Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

The river Hiddekel is the same which the Persians call the Tigris, and for a similar reason; the signification of both words in their respective languages referring to the swiftness of its flow. The Euphrates and Tigris both passed through Media into Mesopotamia, and probably the prophet was placed near their junction, which was about Seleucia and Ctesiphon. A man is seen "clothed in linen," which is the official habit of a priest, and his "loins were girded with fine gold," for the priests wore the girdle of the ephod made of gold, blue, purple, and fine twined linen (Exod. xxviii. 8). His body, or the uncovered part of it, resembled the colour of the precious stone called beryl, which was azure. His face had "the appearance of lightning," bright and awful, with "eyes as lamps of fire," expressive of omniscient penetration; his arms and feet "like polished brass" denote strength and glorious firmness of purpose; and "the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude," signifying the rich and copious variety, as

well as impressive force of his communications. The similarity of this description to that which is contained in the Apocalyptic vision of John, must at once strike the mind of every reader of Scripture, and lead him to think of him whose glory and whose grace were displayed to his banished servant in Patmos in attractive combination. Rev. i. 14, 15.

The men that were with Daniel did not see the vision, but fled at the first sight of the splendor and the sound of the mighty voice.—These were probably the servants of the prophet, as he lived with distinction at the Persian court. Thus the young man who attended on Elisha saw not the chariots and horses of fire (2 Kings vi. 17), and those who accompanied Paul were equally appalled and overwhelmed (Acts ix. 7). How awful is religion to an unholy mind, and how slow are men to be reconciled not only to the more stupendous displays of divine majesty and authority, but even to his most gracious manifestations in Christ. Hence his ministerial ambassadors have continual occasion to urge the important plea—"be ye reconciled to God."

Thus was he "left alone," and the appearance of this "great vision," as he terms it, overpowered for a time his senses and exhausted his strength. The voice, however, was heard while he lay as in a sleep or swoon upon the ground, into which it should seem he sunk un-

der the powerful and commingled emotions of awe, love, and joy. The patriarch's language appears adapted to this occasion, and might be supposed to express his feelings. "How dreadful is this place! Surely it is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven!" There is a vision, however, of the Son of God, which will be exhibited beyond these regions of sin and mortality, and which redeemed souls in a more purified and prepared condition of existence, will not only be able to sustain in all its intensity, but realize as constituting the perfection of their immortal blessedness.

- 10.—And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands.
- 11.—And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.
- 12.—Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Daniel, it appears, was first raised from his prostrate position to his knees by the touch of a celestial messenger, and then empowered as directed to stand upright, though trembling with astonishment and reverence not unmingled with apprehension. From the circumstances we should conclude that it was the glory of the Shekinah which was here

displayed, and that attendant angels by divine command engaged in the ministrations required. As Gabriel touched the prophet on a former occasion (ch. ix. 21), and with a similar assurance (v. 23) of his being "greatly beloved," it has been supposed that the same angel appeared to him in this manner. It was a cheering intimation that he was heard from the first day when he devoted himself to sacred study and humiliation; and his conduct furnishes an example worthy of imitation, of diligent inquiry into the oracles of God and the mind of the Spirit. There is no part of Scripture which does not deserve and demand investigation, and he who dictated these pages will, if we seek his illuminations, guide us into the knowledge of their contents.

When the angel says, "understand the words that I speak unto thee," it implies that they would not at first be obvious, but, like all important, and especially all figurative, communications respecting futurity and the government of God, would demand patient, serious, and persevering research. We ought not assuredly to rest contented with a general or superficial acquaintance with Scripture, but feel it an incumbent duty to dig deep into the mines of revelation, and we shall certainly be repaid with the rich and abundant ores of heavenly wisdom. Let us remember that the profoundest humility accompanied, in the case

of Daniel, the most anxious investigation, for he “set his heart to understand,” and at the same time “chastened himself before God ;” and let us also remember that it is in immediate connexion with this devout and inquiring spirit that he is called “greatly beloved.”

Having stated his commission to visit Daniel, the angel thus proceeds—

13.—But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days : but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me ; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Satan, the prince or “God of this world,” by himself or one of his chief agents employed his machinations to instigate Cambyses and the court of Persia to hostilities against the Jews, while the angelic spirit, to whom this ministration was entrusted, employed his efforts to influence the king and his nobles in their favour. Contests of this nature are mentioned in other places. Compare Zech. iii. 1—3, Jude ix. Rev. xii. 7, 8. The opposition in question lasted twenty-one days, during which time Daniel was engaged in fasting and prayer. The angel who addressed the prophet, intimates that he was assisted by one, named Michael, of a superior order. He is called one, or, as has been rendered, the first of the “chief princes.”

14.—Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days ; for yet the vision is for *many* days.

By the "latter days" and the reference or the vision to "days," or time to come, our views are naturally conducted through the perspective of revolving ages, all the events of which till the great consummation must be contemplated with reference to the Jewish nation, or "Daniel's people," whose affairs form the centre of the chief transactions of this lower world.

In the Syriac it is "even to the end of the days" or the end of time. In the Greek and Vulgate "for days." The word "many" is improperly introduced into the English translation.

15.—And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

The prophet was so impressed by the communication that he represents himself as fixing his eyes upon the ground, like a person thunder-struck, and found himself for a time unable to utter a word. Profound awe and "godly fear" become us while receiving through the medium of Scripture the revelations of heaven; and yet with what surprising and criminal indifference are these glorious revelations frequently treated! Persons may indeed imagine that greater effects would be produced upon their minds were some angelic messenger to be sent to them, or some visible symbols of the present Deity exhibited; but whatever temporary impression might be

made on those who are habitually disregarding of divine instructions and appeals, there can be no reason to presume that it would either be permanent or beneficial ;—“Nay, if one went unto them from the dead they would not repent.”

16.—And, behold, *one* like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips : then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

17.—For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord ? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. “

By the touch of the celestial visitant he was again roused to the use of speech, when having first referred to his deep and exhausting emotions, he inquires, “how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord ?” Daniel speaks of himself as the servant of the angel who had touched him, according to the usual expression of respect, and intimates his conscious incapacity of holding converse with that uncreated spirit, the form of the Son of God, who appeared in the official vestment of the priesthood. Self-abasement is a conspicuous feature in the character of Daniel, and in fact eminently prepares the saint for an intercourse with the Divine Lord, from which, nevertheless, he almost feels himself ready to shrink under an overwhelming sense of his greatness and glory.

- 18.—Then there came again and touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me.
- 19.—And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not ; peace *be* unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me.
- 20.—Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia ; and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.
- 21.—But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth ; and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

The former angel having again addressed him, intimates that he should return to the contest with the prince of Persia, whom Satan was instigating against the church ; after which period it is predicted that “the prince of Grecia shall come,” or the Macedonian empire in Alexander, under whose successors, especially Antiochus, great opposition would be excited against the church of God. The angel promised to communicate more fully the purposes of heaven as “noted in the Scripture of truth.” Upon this Lowth justly remarks, “God’s decrees are spoken of as if they were committed to writing and registered in a book.” Michael is said to “hold with” or cooperate with the other angel, in the conduct of these affairs which would be ultimately more advantageous to the Jews.

That Daniel should have been addressed a third time as a person “greatly beloved” was

an extraordinary honour which this eminent and aged saint well knew how to appreciate. The infirmities of decaying nature evidently blended their influence with the emotions of a self-abasing piety, and these were tenderly compassionated by the ministering angel who was directed to employ the words of kindness and encouragement. How often is our extremity of mental feeling or corporeal suffering God's opportunity of gracious manifestation! He will not permit us to be tried beyond what we are able to bear, and he knows the precise moment when it is most appropriate and most beneficial to impart consolation. "Fear not"—is language which breathes from the heart of affection, bespeaking an ever-watchful care and an ever-present aid. The ear of faith recognizes the cheering accents as proceeding from her beloved Lord, "the angel of the covenant," amidst the prostrations of penitence, the contumelious reproaches and fierce oppositions of a hostile world, the perplexing movements of a mysterious providence, the painful conflicts of severe and manifold temptations, the accumulating imbecilities of advancing age, and the deathful sinkings of dissolving humanity.

LECTURE XVI.

DANIEL XI. 1—30.

Verse 1.—Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even* I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

This appears to be a continuation of the angel's address to Daniel, in which he intimates the further proceedings of the celestial messengers in encouraging the favourable dispositions of Darius towards the Jews. Some, from a slight variation in the manuscripts, and considerable differences in the versions, think it might refer to the prophet, and the words be rendered "I stood to strengthen *thee*;" but the former exhibits an adequate sense, and is confirmed by the mark of transition *now*, at the commencement of the following verse.

Verse 2.—And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

- 3.—And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.
- 4.—And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven ; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled : for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

This prophecy may be regarded as a historical explanation of the former, respecting the ram and the he-goat, and reveals the succession of the Persian and Grecian empires. The repetition of the same events in different modes of representation materially assists us in their verification, and furnishes an opportunity of introducing other collateral and confirmatory circumstances. Canbyses, Smerdis the Magian, and Darius Hystaspis, appear to be the three successive occupants of the Persian throne intended. The fourth was Xerxes, the son of this Darius, who collected immense treasures, and excited his subjects and allies to invade Greece ; against which he proceeded with an army of 1,700,000 men, collected from forty nations distinctly named by Herodotus, and constituting with their attendants at least five millions of people. The fleet from Asia amounted to 1200 ships. This prodigious armament suffered a signal defeat and dispersion ; and its infatuated leader, who had vainly boasted that he would cast mount Athos into the sea, and who absurdly lashed the Hellespont, as if he were ruler of the earth

and ocean, was murdered by Artabanus, the captain of his guards.

Passing over the history of the intermediate kings, and distinguishing only the change of dynasty and empire, the spirit of prophecy represents the result of the wars between Persia and Greece, in Alexander's conquest of Persia. He was the mighty king who ruled with extensive dominion and despotic influence. His kingdom, however, was "plucked up" for the advantage of others, and not of his own family. Treachery and murder consigned them to premature oblivion, and the kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Thrace, and Macedon, became four distinct sovereignties under Seleucus, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Cassander.

Verse 5.—And the king of the south shall be strong, and *one* of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion *shall be* a great dominion.

As it was the purpose of the angel to show to Daniel what should happen to *his people*, the Jews, in the latter days, the history of the kingdoms of Macedon and Thrace is omitted, and that of the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, pointed out as north and south, from their relative localities to Judea, is given because of the affairs of those nations being connected with the interests of that distinguished people. "Causes which are apparently the slightest, are sometimes productive of the most momentous

events; and the fate of empires is often dependent on the private history of kings. And the circumstantiality with which the anticipated history of the successive kings of the south and of the north, or of Egypt and Syria, is narrated by the prophet, and every prominent event traced to its source, gives palpable illustration that, in the sight of the Eternal, there is no darkness in the most distant ages, and no secret in all the hearts of the children of men.”—(Keith.)

Egypt was south of Syria, and its King, that is, the founder of the dynasty, Ptolemy Lagus, appears to be in the eye of prophecy. He was the first to reduce Judea, and extended his conquests over the coast of Phœnicia and the greater part of Syria: thus he was “strong.” But one of his (Alexander’s) princes was “strong above him”; for Seleucus Nicator, after various conquests, seated himself on the throne of Syria, and, with the exception of Egypt, stretched his dominion, “a great dominion,” over all the countries which were subjugated by Alexander. Thus in him and his successors “the king of the north” may be recognized.

Verse 6.—And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king’s daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in *these* times.

Antiochus Soter was the son and successor of Seleucus, and was succeeded by Antiochus Theos. Ptolemy Philadelphus, or the second of the Ptolemies, (whose reign was signalized by the production of the Greek or Septuagint version of the Old Testament, B. C. 273), occupied the rival throne of Egypt, and for a long period war was carried on between them, till "in the end of the years" they united.—The Syriac monarch, having divorced his wife, married Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy—an event celebrated with great pomp, and presumed to lay the basis of a permanent connexion of interests. The remaining statement in this verse, however, was verified in the fact that the king of Egypt's daughter was divorced in her turn, and the former queen of Antiochus recalled. She, however, from distrust and ambition, caused her husband to be poisoned, her son to be elevated to the throne, and Berenice and her son, with all her partizans, to be slain. "They that brought her," her Egyptian attendants and her son, were also killed, and Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was greatly attached to her, and had "strengthened her in those times," died.

Verse 7.—But out of a branch of her roots shall *one* stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail :

8.—And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, *and* with their precious vessels of sil-

ver and of gold; and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the north.

9.—So the king of the south shall come into *his* kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

The ancestry of Berenice is called “her roots,” Ptolemy Philadelphus, her father, was a “branch,” and Ptolemy Euergetes, her brother, who succeeded her father in the kingdom, was “out of” this branch. He came with an army to avenge his sister’s death, and entering easily into the strongest fortresses of the kingdom, prevailed against Seleucus Callinicus. He took many captives and immense spoil, as it is predicted. Their “gods” are particularly specified; and history records that he took away 2500 of these idols, many of which Cambyses had formerly transported into Egypt; for which exploit his title of Euergetes (the well-doer) was conferred. He survived Callinicus several years, and retained an unmolested dominion. Josephus relates that, after Ptolemy had obtained all Syria, he came to Jerusalem, and there offered sacrifices to God, and dedicated presents suitable to his victory. For this reason probably he is noticed in this prophetic history, the history of the Jews being interwoven with the narrative.

Verse 10.—But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces; and *one* shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, *even* to his fortress.

The sons of Seleucus Callinicus, the king of the north, were Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great, both of whom waged war to recover their paternal territories from Ptolemy.—The former was poisoned and accomplished nothing; but Antiochus overran Cœlo-Syria and the dominions of the Egyptian monarch, the son of Euergetes, and meditated the invasion of that kingdom. He, however, accepted a truce for four months and “returned”; but was “stirred up” to prepare for war during the negotiations, which gave little promise of peace, and again advanced towards Egypt, recovering the dominions that had been lost.

Verse 11.—And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, *even* with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

12.—*And* when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down *many* ten thousands; but he shall not be strengthened *by it*.

Ptolemy became now exceedingly exasperated, and opposed him with an army of 75,000 horse and foot, with seventy elephants, not far from Gaza. Ptolemy was successful and re-obtained Palestine, while Antiochus, with his shattered forces, was compelled to sue for peace. His heart was “lifted up,” or elated with his triumph. He received the submission of Syria, entered Jerusalem, and was so envenomed against the Jews, that he destroyed

forty, or as some affirm 50,000, and could scarcely be restrained from entering the holy of holies.

Verse 13.—For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14.—And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

15.—So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither *shall there be any* strength to withstand.

16.—But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

After the lapse of fourteen years, Antiochus raised a larger army than before, and having gained over the king of Macedon, attacked Egypt. The juncture was favorable to his efforts, as Ptolemy Philopater being dead, was succeeded by his infant son. Several of the tributary provinces revolted, and the Jews, the *revolters* (called robbers) who had been subject to the Ptolemies during two reigns, “exalted themselves to establish the vision,” or contribute to its accomplishment: but they *fell*, being subdued by the forces of Ptolemy in the absence of Antiochus, who had withdrawn his army to Asia Minor, after the sub-

mission of Syria. He however returned, as the prophecy intimates, defeated the Egyptians, and took Sidon, a strongly fortified place, and another of "the most fenced cities," till all Syria was reduced. Resistance proved ineffectual—nothing could "stand before him," and he established himself in Judea, "the glorious land," the land of the chosen people of God, the scene of special divine manifestations. One might be tempted to suppose that providence would have defended such a country from these incursions and desolations; "the thoughts of God, however, are not our thoughts;" but while he inflicts temporal afflictions and punishments, he does not withhold his pardoning mercy.

Verse 17.—He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him: thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand *on his side*, neither be for him.

The Jews received Antiochus willingly, and Josephus informs us that he made a decree by which they were permitted to live according to their own rites and laws, and to enjoy many immunities. They assisted him to obtain possession of Egypt when he "set his face to enter with the strength of his kingdom;" and he attempted to circumvent Ptolemy by proposing to give him Cleopatra, his daughter, in marriage; but the object failed in consequence

of this celebrated “daughter of women” adhering to the interests of her husband against her father, and she even congratulated the Roman senate upon his defeat, soliciting their protection against him.

Verse 18.—After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many : but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease ; without his own reproach he shall cause *it* to turn upon him.

19.—Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land : but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Having triumphed in Asia, and passed the Hellespont, Antiochus attacked and vanquished many of the islands of the Egean sea, particularly Eubœa or Negropont, which submitted with all its cities. But the Romans never suffered any one to enter hostilely any country in alliance with them, with impunity ; and accordingly proclaimed war against the intruder. Antiochus was completely conquered and driven back in disgrace “toward the foot of his own land” or Antioch. Soon after he “stumbled and fell ;” for he was killed by the inhabitants of Elymais, who were enraged at his plundering their rich temple of Jupiter Belus, to pay the tribute which had been exacted from him by the Romans.

Verse 20.—Then shalt stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes *in* the glory of the kingdom : but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

Seleucus Philopater "stood up in his estate" or succeeded to his throne, who was all his life a raiser of taxes," or rigidly taxed his people to satisfy the Roman demands; or, as in the margin, he "caused an exactor to pass over the glory of his kingdom," by sending his treasurer, Heliodorus, to rifle the temple of Jerusalem, by whose treachery he was at length slain.

- Verse 21.—And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.
- 22.—And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.
- 23.—And after the league *made* with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.
- 24.—He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province: and he shall do *that* which his fathers' have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches; *yea*, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.
- 25.—And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.
- 26.—Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow; and many shall fall down slain.
- 27.—And both these kings' hearts *shall* be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end *shall* be at the time appointed.

The brother and successor of Philopater was Antiochus Epiphanes, who acquired his station by artifice, and especially by flattering the Romans ; and was so “*vile*” a person, that his debaucheries and follies induced a contemporary historian to affix the name of *Epimanes* or *madman* upon him, instead of *Epiphanes* the *illustrious*. He was, at first, very successful, bearing down all oppositions and rivalries as with a “flood ;” and dispossessing Onias, the high priest, of his office, the prince of God’s covenanted people, he sold to his younger brother Jason ; but he “worked deceitfully,” transferring it to Menelaus for another sum of money. Though he had, at first, only a few followers from Rome, yet his authority was soon confirmed, and he “became strong.” By extreme profusion and liberality in the distribution of wealth, he gained great popularity ; and, meditating an attack upon Egypt, he traversed the plain of Palestine and fortified the frontiers of Syria. His successes against Egypt and the provinces surpassed those of his predecessors. He entered the kingdom of his sister’s son, Ptolemy Philometer, in defiance alike of justice and natural affection, and after defeating him in many battles, possessed himself of nearly the entire country. The young king was then dethroned by his subjects, who substituted his brother Psychon ; but Antiochus professed to espouse

the cause of Philometer. There could, however, be no confidence between them, that they “spake lies at one table;” but it did not “prosper,” for, no sooner was Antiochus withdrawn, than Philometer united with his brother and was again proclaimed king at Alexandria; appealing to Rome for aid, which power at the “time appointed” put an end to the usurpations of Antiochus.

Verse 28.—Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits*, and return to his own land.

After he had returned with the plundered treasures of Egypt, a false report was circulated of his death, which the Jews almost celebrated as a victory. This exasperated Antiochus, who hastened to Judea, took Jerusalem, despoiled the temple of its golden vessels and treasures, slew 40,000, and sent twice that number into slavery. He then returned to the land.

Verse 29.—At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

30.—For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

At the expiration of two years he returned to renew his attempts against Egypt, but “it was not as the former or the latter.” At first

he had come with a small army and prevailed by craft; next, with a large army and routed the Egyptians, and endeavoured to retain his power by making Ptolemy a vassal king: now, neither fraud nor force availed. The Roman senate despatched ambassadors requiring him to lay down his arms. They came by sea, probably in Grecian ships: hence, "the ships of Chittim" are said to come against him. The countries peopled by the descendants of Chittim, the son of Javan, the son of Japhet, were probably so called, and the reference may be to the islands of the Mediterranean and the coasts extending to Greece. Not daring to encounter the Romans, who intimated by their ambassadors a determination to declare war if he did not depart from Egypt, he was compelled, however reluctant or "grieved," to retrace his steps. But he gave vent to his indignation on the Jews, who were in "holy covenant" with God; and, in league with Menelaus and other apostate Jews, abrogated the worship of God in the temple of Jerusalem, and even consecrated the temple itself to Jupiter Olympius. "There is not," says bishop Newton, "so complete and regular a series of these kings, there is not so concise and comprehensive an account of their affairs, to be found in any author of those times. The prophecy is really more perfect than any history: no one historian hath related so many circumstances and in such exact order, as the prophet hath foretold them."

LECTURE XVII.

DANIEL XI. 31—45; CHAPTER XII. 1—4.

Verse 31.—And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

32.—And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*.

33.—And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days.

34.—Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

35.—And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed.

At this point of the prophecy there appears to be a sudden transition to another power and to other scenes than those which have been previously introduced. The question therefore arises, in what occurrences shall we find the accomplishment of this record? The term “arms” may be rendered *mighty forces*

or powers. "Standing up," is the phrase before employed to denote the rise of the Macedonian and other empires or potentates. These arms or powers are considered to refer to the military dominion which spread on the side of Greece, for Paulus Æmilius subdued Macedonia, and the remaining states came under the yoke of Rome in the reign of Epiphanes. The narration having specified the proceedings of those kingdoms which alternately possessed themselves of Judea, the angel, it is believed, now informs Daniel of what should befall the Jews on the dissolution of their state by the Romans. They "polluted the sanctuary, took away the daily sacrifice, and placed the abomination that maketh desolate," when their idolatrous eagles were planted in Jerusalem, and Pompey entered the holy of holies. Many Jews and Christians apostatised to pagan idolatry, being "corrupted by flatteries"; while others who maintained the faith pure and inviolate "did exploits" in the exhibition of the martyr's heroism, and "instructed many," by an indefatigable and persevering effort in the propagation of the doctrines of Christianity. During the successive reigns of the persecuting emperors they suffered incredible tortures, and "fell by the sword, and by flame, and by captivity, and by spoil." They were, however, "holpen with a little help." The edicts of Diocletian seemed to be nearly fatal

to the Christian cause ; but in the year of Christ, 306, Constantine the Great was elevated to the Roman throne, which produced a period of external prosperity and peace to the church. But the spirit of persecution soon revived, Christians themselves became miserably disunited, and the character of the church of Christ awfully corrupted. An unholy hierarchy gradually rose to distinction and dominion, and “men of understanding,” or those who obeyed the dictates of conscience combining with sober inquiry into the truth,—in fact, multitudes of the faithful followers of the Saviour, became the victims of papal intolerance :—a *trying*, indeed, but still a *whitening* or *purifying* process. The “time of the end” and the “time appointed” may signify generally the period of the termination of the troubles of God’s people, or more precisely the close of the prophetic vision at the downfall of all anti-christian powers.

Verse 36.—And the king shall do according to his will ; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished : for that that is determined shall be done.

By the name “king,” Mede, and others after him, understand the Roman state or power, under whatever kind of government : but it is more especially referred to Rome papal, of which power the description is deemed pecu-

liarly graphic. His despotism, blasphemy, and self-exaltation, are clearly marked : and he was to “prosper till the indignation be accomplished,” or the time, times, and a half, the 1260 years, when the “wonders,” as afterwards named, shall end. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 4 ; Rev. xiii. 11, 12 ; Rev. xviii. 3, 15, 18. Hence the prediction proceeds :—

Verse 37.—Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god : for he shall magnify himself above all.

38.—But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces : and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

39.—Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory : and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

His disregarding the God of his fathers may apply to the contempt of the true religion of the apostles, from whom the papacy pretended its origin, and to the general corruption of Christian worship. The “desire of women” points out the interdiction of marriage, for which the Roman See is so notorious, and which has been productive of innumerable evils. The term rendered “god of forces” is *Mahuzzim*, literally *protectors* or *defenders*, meaning the objects of worship, or tutelary saints and angels adored in catholic churches. These have been honoured with costly shrines

and images. In the year 787, image worship was fully ratified by the seventh general council, or the second at Nice. "It is a thing not to be passed by without admiration, that the fathers and others, even at the beginning of saint-worship, by I know not what fatal instinct, used to call saints and their relics *towers, walls, bulwarks, fortresses*, i. e. *Mahuzzim*, in the prime and original signification."—*Mede*. In the dark times of a dominant popery, every country had its tutelar saint, and in the name of these saints the popes and the priesthood "ruled over many" with a power the most extensive and despotic. The popish priesthood "divided the land for gain." Newton remarks "that the principal teachers and propagators of the worship of Mahuzzim, the bishops, and priests, and monks, and religious orders, have been honoured and revered, and almost adored in former ages; that their authority and jurisdiction have extended over the purses and consciences of men; that they have been enriched with noble buildings and large endowments, and have had the choice of the lands appropriated for church lands, are points of such notoriety that they require no proof, as they will admit of no denial."

Verse 40.—And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

- 41.—He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.
- 42.—He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.
- 43.—But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps.

It has been remarked that it is not the end of the time, but the time of the end which is here mentioned, that is, it is at the end of this vision when the events in question were to occur. The time of the end denotes the duration of the time from the rise to the extinction of the power. The sovereignties of Egypt and Syria, before called the king of the south and the king of the north, disappeared when they were absorbed in the Roman empire; and the new powers, or the Saracen and Turkish empires that succeeded, are now brought into view. But let it be observed, that the *Saracens* became masters of Egypt, the original territory of the king of the *south*, and the *Turks* possessed Syria or the kingdom of the north, and still retain it.

“The king of the south shall push at him”: the power of Rome was overthrown in the east by the Saracens. This was the *first woe* of the Revelation, which was to pass away after 300 years. The Turks then came, a whirlwind of northern barbarians, and achieved a

lasting conquest in a day, of the Asiatic provinces of the Roman empire. The line of march was along the north of Palestine, and the Turkish monarch entered only to pass through and overflow. "He entered into the glorious land," for as Gibbon has stated it, "the most interesting conquests of the Seljukian Turks, was that of *Jerusalem*, which soon became the theatre of nations." But "Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon escaped out of his hand." Even when all the regions round owned the Turkish sway, these retained their detached and separate character, and even received tribute from the pilgrims as they passed to the shrines of Mecca and Medina. Thus have they escaped and maintained their independence of the Porte. A race of monarchs arose "to stretch out their hand upon the countries; Othman, Amurath, Bajazet, Mohammed, conquered nation after nation, and finally fixed the seat of their empire in Constantinople. The land of Egypt "did not escape." It was indeed the last to yield; but though its forces had vanquished both Christians and Turks, it was at length subdued by Selim 1., in 1517, and came into possession of the Ottomans. The tributaries or confederates of the Egyptian sultans, the inhabitants of the more southern and western parts of Africa, sent their ambassadors with presents to Selim; and thus the "Libyans and Ethiopians were at his steps."

Verse 44.—But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him : therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

45.—And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain ; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

These predictions, it is generally agreed, relate to events still future. If the interpretation of the preceding verses be correct, they must belong to the Turkish empire, and to the ultimate condition of the Jews. It seems to be intimated that the Turk will plant his tabernacles, or fix his encampments in the Holy Land, “between the seas,” that is, the seas near Jerusalem, or the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean ; and that there, having enjoyed a temporary triumph, he will experience a signal and fatal overthrow. Whether the Russian and Persian powers are destined to inflict this providential visitation, as many have supposed, must be left to the disclosures of futurity ; certain it is, every other anti-christian power must ultimately fall ; and, if we may judge from the signs of the times, at no distant period.

CHAPTER XII. 1—4.

- Verse 1.—And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.
- 2.—And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.
- 3.—And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.
- 4.—But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

When the great event, immediately before referred to, shall have occurred, Michael the prince, who has already been introduced in so important a relation to the Jewish affairs, will vindicate the cause of that people; and while their enemies and the enemies of true religion shall suffer a final destruction, so disastrous in its character and circumstances as to surpass all other recorded instances of national calamity, the Jews who are mercifully “written in the book of divine remembrance will be “delivered,” or emancipated from their long thralldom and oppression. After this “many” or the multitudes of mankind that are dead shall awake to receive their respective sentences in judgement as righteous or wicked, and to be assigned their respective inherit-

ances of joy or sorrow for ever. Glorious will be the destiny of "the wise," or all real believers; and they especially will be distinguished, who by their faithful ministrations have been instrumental in diffusing the gospel, and saving souls from death. Amidst the "brightness" and the glory that all the redeemed universe will participate, it shall be theirs to shine "as the stars," with a distinct and resplendent glory, "high in salvation and the climes of bliss." Upon this intimation, Daniel was directed to shut up and seal the book to the time of the end; implying that these last events will only be unravelled, in their full glory and meaning, as the time for their accomplishment approaches, when great inquiry should be excited and increasing knowledge acquired, as they will break one after another in rapid and splendid succession upon the view of the church.

These opening verses of the twelfth chapter appear to have a very clear and pointed reference, though more briefly narrated, to the series of events recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the Revelations. The standing up of Michael for Daniel's people, corresponds with the going forth of him who is called "faithful and true," upon the white horse. The trouble here predicted, agrees with the mighty overthrow of anti-christian powers, who are to be cast into the "lake

burning with brimstone," as there represented. The deliverance of the people written in the book, relates to the first resurrection or prevalence of emancipated religion, when the dragon is bound and cast into the bottomless pit ; and the awaking of those who are in the dust to life, or shame and contempt, is more elaborately and solemnly represented in the awful description at the conclusion of the apocalyptic vision of the last judgment.—“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

LECTURE XVIII.

DANIEL XII. 5—13.

Verse 5.—Then I Daniel looked, and behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

6.—And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be* to the end of these wonders?

The vision being still further prolonged, the prophet saw two other angels, one on each bank of the Tigris, and heard them conversing upon the great events which were the subject of the preceding revelations. Although this may be regarded, as we have intimated, as a vision, yet it suggests that there is at least, no incongruity in the supposition that the inhabitants of the invisible world are not only engaged in acts of praise and worship, but devote much of their happy existence to research and mutual intercourse. We have New Testament authority for asserting that “the angels desire

to look into" the mysteries of redeeming love ; and this book, as well as many other parts of the volume of inspiration, represents them as being considerably interested, and, in some respects, associated with those providential dispensations which concern the church on earth. Can we imagine, indeed, that intelligent and immortal beings, possessed both of capacity and opportunity to explore the operations of an infinite wisdom, should be otherwise than possessed of a spirit of inquiry ; and can we question that the exercise of similar, however inferior, powers of mind, in investigations prompted by an intelligent curiosity, in the interchanges of sentiment and the reciprocations of a hallowed friendship, will constitute a portion of *our* future felicity, as well as *theirs*, in the celestial state ?

The question proposed to the man who was seen clothed in linen was one of the greatest interest.—“How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” Perhaps, however, it was put chiefly for the sake of Daniel, who naturally felt extreme solicitude on the subject, and was the destined medium of prophetic communication to future times. Every thing, indeed, was wonderful in these revelations ; the events themselves and the manner of their accomplishment : nor is it, perhaps improbable that new scenes of wonder, even to the highest order of beings, will continue, when time shall

be no more, to unfold themselves in an everlasting series in the world to come.

Verse 7.—And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.

The lifting up of the hand towards heaven was the ancient mode of indicating the greater truth and solemnity of an affirmation “Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,” Gen. xiv. 22. From the similarity of the description contained in the tenth chapter of the Revelations, many expositors have adopted the conclusion that the man clothed in the priestly garment and uttering these words was the Son of God himself. “And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.”

The date given in this passage has been already explained (chap. vii. 25,) as expressing 1260 years. These great transactions are to be finished after this period, when “he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the

holy people," or rather, "when he shall have accomplished the scattering," that is, when the dispersion of the Jews shall terminate. This period is evidently the same with that which in the Revelations (x. 7.) is denominated "the finishing of the mystery of God."

Verse 8.—And I heard, but I understood not : then said I,
O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things* ?

9.—And he said, Go thy way, Daniel : for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

10.—Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly ; and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the wise shall understand.

The prophet is anxious for further information respecting the closing period of time.—“What shall be the end of *these* things ?” What is to occur after the expiration of the 1260 years and the restoration of the Jews ? An intimation had been given respecting the resurrection, and Daniel became solicitous of more minute information. The angel checks this curiosity before giving even a very general answer, assuring him that future events would not be fully understood till the period of their actual occurrence. There is a point, then, to which we may legitimately pursue our inquiries, but where it becomes us to pause.—Prophecy is intended to guide us along the bright outline of the future, but not to make us historians by anticipation ; to impart so much as may serve for the needful instruction and

encouragement of the people of God amidst the tribulations of those latter days which will precede the ultimate triumphs and glory of the church, but not to acquaint them with the secret intentions of God with regard to the minuter character of those events which are written in the book of his decrees. To steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of a desponding and neglectful indifference to prophecy and a dogmatic interpretation, is an important attainment, and is precisely that course which tends to tranquillize the spirit amidst surprising changes, and sustain it by pleasing hopes.

The angel in the tenth verse represents, in general, that the people of God will be benefitted by the tribulations of those last times in which they will be called to participate; but as in previous periods, so then, this discipline will fail of any great purpose in the case of the wicked. Their foolish hearts will be darkened; they will not study and will not understand the wonderful movements of providence; while the wise, the inquiring, humble, and expectant servants of Christ, will perceive that the truth of inspiration, the glory of the Saviour, and their personal salvation, were all involved in the development and termination of these splendid mysteries of providence and grace.

There are three remarkable points of contrast exhibited in this passage.

1. *A contrast of character.* The term "wise" describes the righteous, who possess that religion which is emphatically "wisdom from above"; the epithet "wicked" expresses both blindness of mind and depravity of heart.

2. *A contrast of moral progress.* The wise are "purified and made white" by their trials; the wicked continue to "do wickedly." The same discipline, the very same dispensations, produce opposite effects; and the determination of their career respectively will exhibit a remarkable and eternal contrast.

3. *A contrast of mental and spiritual perception.* It is affirmed that "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Wickedness contracts the mind, debases the understanding, and renders man so selfish and carnal, that he becomes incapacitated for taking any comprehensive view of the divine administration, and indisposed to these sacred inquiries. One important point, especially, which the one, through the teachings of that Spirit, who is humbly but incessantly sought by Christians, *does* understand, and which the other, through wilful blindness and perverseness of heart, *does not* understand, is *the connexion of the operations of providence in the general affairs of the world, with the establishment, extension, and ultimate triumph of the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Verse 11.—And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Verse 12.—Blessed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

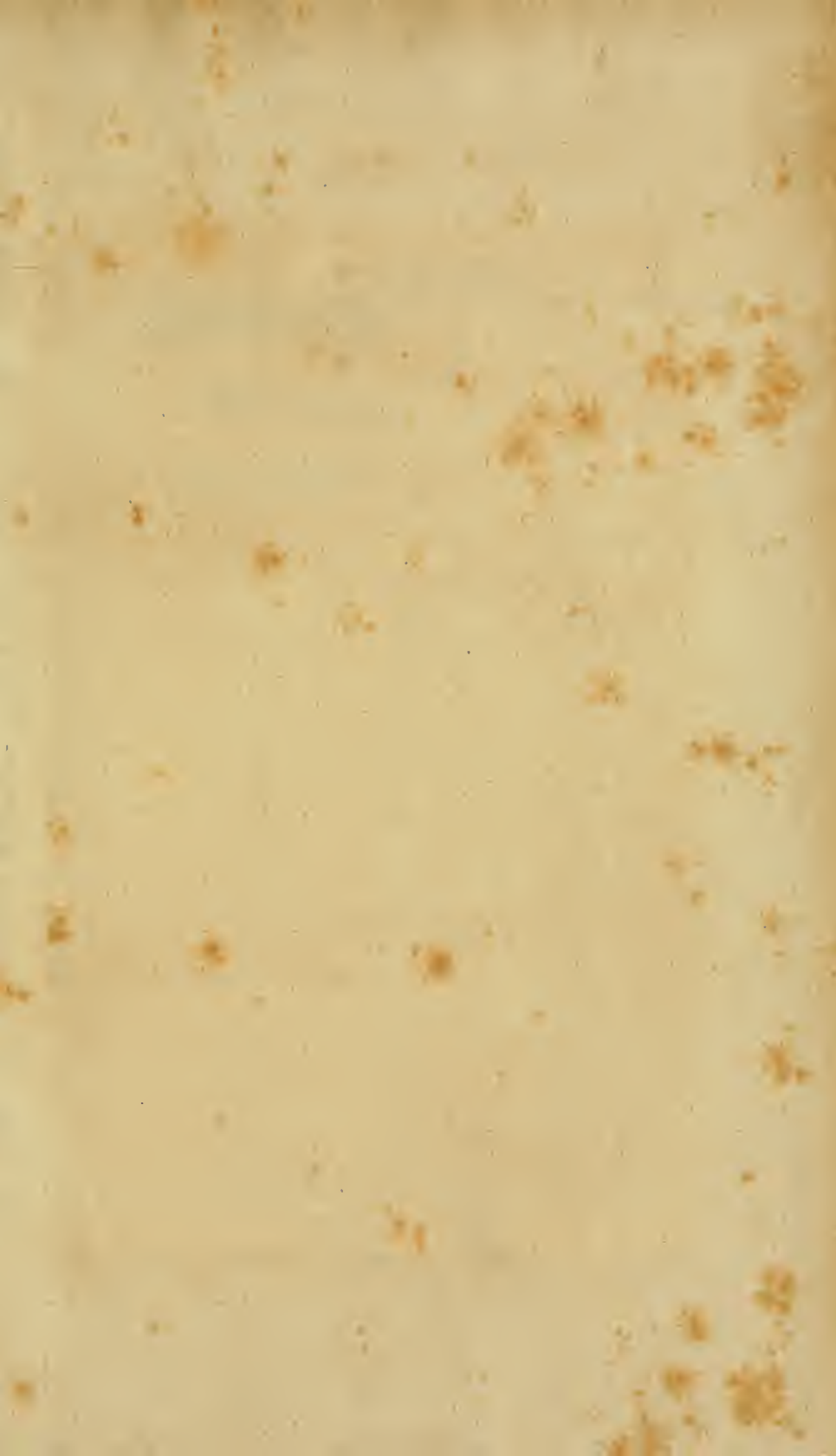
The expressions respecting the removal of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, appear, by a comparison of passages in Daniel and in the New Testament, to be applied to different events; at one time referring to the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, at another to the establishment of Mohammedanism, and at another to the rise of Popery. To one or other of the two latter, which is nearly the same period, we have seen reason, already to apply them. A further period of thirty days or years is here added, marking, perhaps, the season during which the predicted overthrow of the anti-christian powers shall be accomplished, or as some suppose, the restoration of the Jews. We presume not to decipher the particular events of the third era of forty-five additional years, producing a period of 1335, the close of the prophetic revelations. As he is pronounced “blessed” who attains that age, we must conclude that it will be the last and most glorious manifestations of God to mankind.

Verse 13.—But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

In the preceding chapter we have “the time of the end,” and “the time appointed,” and here “the end,” and “the end of the days.”—The former phrases, as it has been stated, refer to the period of the destruction of the anti-christian powers: “*the end*” seems descriptive of the close of time, to which “the end of the days” is also equivalent, signifying the period, whatever it may be; after the 1335 years or volume of prophetic revelation shall have terminated in one of glory. The promise here recorded, unquestionably gives this aged and honoured servant of God, an assurance of his personal salvation, when the affairs of this world shall be consummated and merged in a blissful eternity. “Thy lot,” therefore, is to be considered as descriptive of his future and heavenly inheritance of blessedness; for, though it be a term evidently borrowed from the ancient division of Canaan among the tribes of Israel, it would appear to be too restricted an interpretation of the promise to limit it to the possession of a portion of land on earth; it seems rather to be a typical view of the incorruptible and immortal inheritance of heaven. In this sentiment I feel the more fully confirmed by the language of Job (xiv. 12.) “Man lieth down, and riseth not; *till the heavens be no more*, they shall not awake”; which remarkably agrees with the representation of the last judgment as intro-

ductory to the final state in the Revelations (xx. 11). "And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face *the earth and the heaven fled away.*" Surely, if we consider, what the lot of every faithful servant of Christ must ultimately be, emancipated forever from the bondage of corruption, exempted from the tribulations of time, and elevated to the glorious intensity of the divine presence, each believer must feel prompted to exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

See Alexander's Evidence p. 46-47/11



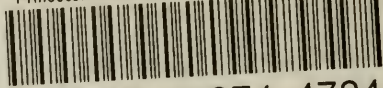


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